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Ishmael and the Church.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

IN introducing the following work to the public, an answer to the following questions may be justly expected:—

What is the subject of which it treats?

What call is there for such a treatise at this time?

What range has been taken, and what method adopted, in treating it?

In the title, “Ishmael and the Church,” is contained a short and comprehensive reply to the first question. This is the text of the discourse,—the thread that ties all its several parts together.

Ishmael has ever “dwelt in the presence of all his brethren,” and his fortunes and those of the church have been remarkably blended from first to last. They cross each other’s track in the patriarch’s tent, in the visions of the prophets, in the creed of Mohammed, in the empires of the Saracens and Ottomans; so that in treating of Ishmael and his descendants we necessarily follow them through the church; for here their way lies. With its affairs they have ever inter-

meddled, and on its changeful and suffering destiny they have ever left the deep impressions of their power. Such, then, is our theme:—"Ishmael and the Church."

Such a work as this is demanded by the stirring events of our own times,—a portable volume, accessible to all, comprehending succinctly "Islamism" in its origin, uses, progress, and end. It should be examined in the light of prophecy as well as of history, and thus made to appear what it truly is,—a creation of Providence, subserving its ends and illustrative of its wonders and its ways. For such a volume the way seems to be now open. It will fill a space occupied by no other.

We are to bear in mind, also, the present anomalous condition of Turkey. Her disappearance from Europe and the appropriation of her soil by the Western Powers are events regarded as imminent. She is a bone of contention,—a centre on which questions of war and peace hinge,—a gateway to most momentous social, political, and religious changes.

A bare glance at these facts will suggest at once that such a theme is necessarily invested with a present interest, and, if rightly treated, must prove highly acceptable to the reading public.

Indeed, would we understand "the Italian question," the policies and necessities of cabinets and princes, this subject needs first to be studied and comprehended. Dark problems with respect to the future will receive by this means a probable

solution, and remote and otherwise unperceived causes will be seen to have attained a controlling maturity, and helpless nations to be afloat upon a sea whose resistless surges carry them where they will not.

Political questions have their religious aspects. These belong to the divine, and fall within the range of his appropriate studies. The questions that now agitate Europe are essentially religious. Religion underlies all its policies and impulses; and hence the religious sympathies of the various parties in the strifes of princes are all the more important to be understood. It is one design of this work to make these palpable.

As to the range taken, it is wide. The relations of Ishmael to the church, and his influence on its destinies, from the days of the patriarch to the fall of the Ottomans, are comprehended in it. The lead of the prophets has been followed, and history is expanded just where the prophets pause and make it necessary—just where after an interval of centuries they point out some new centre of influence, that, springing up irresistibly, changes the entire course of events; or just where, the crescent crossing into the plane of the church, an adorable Providence becomes conspicuous in the use that it makes of this formidable power in compassing its ends.

This has made the line of the true church, as distinguished from the false, an important object of interest and search. It has hence been care-

fully eliminated and traced from Asia and Africa to Europe and America.

It has also made the "Testament of Mohammed," and the consequent protection of persecuted disciples by the Saracens, the subject of special inquiry and elucidation. The aggressions of the Turks in Asia,—the Crusades, and their favourable effects on the church left behind in Europe,—the fall of the Eastern capital,—the desirable results accruing from that event, and the indirect though real protection of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, arising from the military ardour and successes of Solyman the Great,—come also under review; and, throughout, the ways of Providence are made obvious, and our confidence in its integrity and wisdom becomes revived and confirmed.

As to method, history has been relied on for facts, and the Divine testimony for evidence that those facts were arranged by Providence to fulfil its purposes.

The work has been prepared for the Protestant world, and care has been taken not to offend against its denominational preferences. If the author has succeeded in making himself useful to the church of our common Master, it will be his sufficient reward.

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ISHMAEL AND THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

ISHMAEL IN HIS YOUTH.

“I see a mighty arm, by man unseen,
Resistless, not to be controll'd, that guides,
In solitude of unshared energies,
All these thy ceaseless miracles, O world!”

LAMB.

THERE are extensive regions in Asia, Africa, and in the east and south of Europe, in which the Mohammedan religion prevails. It is false, intolerant, and antichristian. Instances there are in which, as in Roman Catholic countries, this intolerance has been for a season intermitted; but still, these instances are exceptions to a rule otherwise universal, and cannot alter a character inherent in the very creed of the false prophet, and traced in blood on the pages of history and on the symbol of his faith.

According to the traditions of Mecca—

which are in harmony, on this point, with the intimations of the prophets of Zion—Mohammed sprang from the loins of Abraham, and from the scoffer Ishmael. “It is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory. . . . For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” Gal. iv. 22-25.

He of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, inherited the unsanctified nature of his Egyptian mother, carried the stamp of inferiority on his brow, and cherished her enmity to true religion in his heart. Nature, true to her laws, had carried down the mental and moral characteristics, the physical tastes, and spiritual idiosyncrasies, from the mother to the child. It occurred also that Sarah's jealousy imparted to her domestic rule a severity difficult for unrenewed humanity to bear, and which, in the mind of the irritated Ishmael, doubtless fully justified the bitter complainings and reproaches of Hagar. “When Sarah dealt hardly with her she fled from her

face." Gen. xvi. 6. Day by day her native hostility to the patriarch's faith received fresh irritation, and in the recesses of the desert, in her frequent communings with her son, would naturally impress its antipathies deeply upon a heart already under the control of a matured impiety. "It set him in a way that was not good; he abhorred not evil." Domestic feuds, embodying so many causes of enduring and increasing repulsiveness, must reach their crisis at last; the parties will seek relief ultimately either in the exercise of mutual forbearance or in a voluntary separation. The latter was the result in the present instance; the aliens became outcasts from a home in which the mistaken Hagar had aspired to rise from the condition of a subordinate and a slave to that of a mistress.

In the church, when it was placed under patriarchal rule, the first-born son succeeded, at the death of the patriarch, to his authority, dignity, and estates, and took, ordinarily, his honoured place as next in the line among the illustrious progenitors of the promised Messiah. Isaac, the child of promise and of miracle, was correctly regarded by Abraham as his successor.

For years previously to the birth of this

divinely-appointed rival, Ishmael had occupied the place and had held in just expectancy the coveted immunities of the first-born,—had been the accredited heir; and, considering the extreme age of his parent, there existed no reasonable prospect of his being supplanted by another. The patriarch also, up to the time of the predicted birth of Isaac, had been satisfied with this arrangement; had prayed, “Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!” nor had he even dreamed of another. But, when it was said, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,”* God revealed a preference which, in its very nature and in the very terms in which it had been conceived, rejected Ishmael from the privileges of primogeniture.

When the solemn yet joyous preparations for the festival in which Isaac was to be weaned and publicly recognised and installed in the succession were in progress, Ishmael was seventeen years of age, capable of comprehending the extent, at least, of his earthly loss, and of an humble and intelligent submission to the known will of heaven; but from that hour his rival became the object of his most unreasonable envy and resentment.

* Gen. xxi. 12.

Cain rejected the same Lord on whom Abel depended alone for salvation. Ishmael followed in the way of Cain. His desire for the patriarchate terminated in its temporal advantages. When these were alienated in Isaac, he scorned the spiritual patrimony and persecuted the child of promise. Similar alternate characteristics are now discoverable in the families of the godly. Some betake themselves in life's young day to Jesus, are seen in the ways of piety, and grow up in the fear of the Lord; others become restive and desire to free themselves from the restraints of a Christian fireside. Born after the flesh, they despise the blessings of the covenant. Controversies in the church, intermarriages with unbelievers, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, the very bread and water which they acquire and carry with them, serve but to increase their dreary distance from all succour amid the spiritual wastes that surround them. Ishmael, in a word, in his rejection of his Lord, is an allegory, and represents Christ in the covenant as the uniform and chosen test of human character, as alternately a sanctuary and a rock of offence, "set for the rising and falling of many in Israel."

CHAPTER II.

ISHMAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.

“There was in him a vital scorn of all,
As if the worst had fallen that could befall;
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurl’d.”

BYRON.

BEERSHEBA lay at the southern extremity of the land of Canaan. Hence, in any description of the country intended to include its entire area, Beersheba was referred to as the extreme southern limit. The wilderness of Beersheba—sometimes also called the wilderness of Paran—comprehended a region lying still farther south, covered with low shrubs and loose sands. On its southern division rises abruptly, from the bosom of a vast and thirsty plain, the frowning battlements of Sinai. In this gloomy solitude, far from the abodes of the godly, Hagar and Ishmael found their congenial retreat.

“Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia.” That covenant of which she is the allegory “gen-

dereth to bondage.”* Ishmael inherited his mother’s nature, imbibed her religious prejudices, espoused her quarrel against Sarah, met with a rival in Isaac, turned against the patriarchal church, persecuted the child of promise, became an outcast; and thus, step by step, commenced his career of wo.

Such is the covenant of Sinai. It is one of hardship and servitude. Under its rigorous workings is engendered the base spirit of servility. Here the moral bondman toils for life in services in which he has no pleasure, is goaded on by curses that appal and a conscience that torments him; and yet every step, every change, is for the worse, involving him in ever-increasing difficulties, and widening more and more fatally his separation from the blessed vicinity of joy and hope.

Such, indeed, is ever the normal career of unbelief. Whenever the true Messiah is left or scorned, whichever plausible alternative after that may be substituted for him, such must ever be the invariable result; perish at last the wanderer must, in an arid waste “where no water is.” That course is dark and hopeless indeed in which Christ is not the centre

* Gal. iv. 24.

to which the weary spirit ever tends. There is an awful spiritual solitude before it; and there also is that Mount Sinai, with its barren declivities and rocky turrets, scarred by thunder; and beyond it is the Red, red sea in which the weary never rest.

Our uninstructed sympathies ever take part with the oppressed and the unfortunate. Sarah's jealousies and cruelties are readily remembered, together with the destitution of the unhappy exiles; but the want of interest on their part in the blessings of a spiritual and a higher life, their promptness in forsaking without a single regret the pure and holy faith of the church because adherence to it had become environed with temporary obstacles, is as readily pardoned and forgotten, though it was their great unworthiness, the true cause of their condemnation and ruin. God, on this account, because he knew they loved him not and cared not for the promised spiritual deliverer, dictated the severity. Sarah's execrations would have proved all impotent and unavailing if God himself had not turned against the aliens. They had merited his displeasure, since they had intruded themselves into his church, whose most sacred things they hated and had dared

to make the objects of their unhallowed scorn.

While the prophetic description—to wit, that he should be a wild man, and that his hand should be against every man*—involved in it no creative or coercive processes, it nevertheless revealed a law inherent in his very nature and in that of his race. During the long period of twenty-seven hundred years his wildness remained untamed. Each one of his offspring, separated from all others in his sympathies for himself alone, maintained his own proud personal independence and marked out for himself his own solitary track. Submission to a chief, if made at all, arose from interest, and was cast off, transferred, or continued, at pleasure. In predatory bands in the days of Jeremiah, they (the descendants of Ishmael) sat for the travellers in the ways of the wilderness,† dreaded by all, lying concealed in the shadows of mountains, or peering from behind the clumps of trees that, bordering the water-courses, invited the wayfarer, at burning noon, to repose. The captive Israelites, released from servitude in Babylon, crossed the track of this inhospitable foe and made grateful mention of the good hand of God upon them, in that he

* Gen. xvi. 12.

† Jer. iii. 2.

had delivered them from “such as lay in wait by the way.”* Impelled by hunger or by lust of plunder, their marauding companies, mounted on the fleet horse of the wilderness that stumbled not,† made frequent incursions into districts governed by neighbouring emirs. The swift and stealthy advance was effected under cover of night. When the morning rose, “and the oxen” (of the unsuspecting) “were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them, the Sabeans” (or Ishmaelites) “fell upon them and took them away.”‡ The assault, seen perchance by a flying servant whose less fortunate companions were slain, is reported; but redress is unthought of and pursuit impossible: the wily robbers had vanished as they came,—in unknown paths and in the solitudes of the wilderness. The Bedouins of the present day perpetuate the original character—the wild and warlike habits of the earliest times, and form a continuous illustration of the extreme individuality and lawlessness of the descendants of Ishmael.

This character, also, is one that equally develops itself in that mighty offshoot from the parent stock which has spread the shadow of its rule for ages over Arabia and over the

* Ezra viii. 31.

† Isa. lxiii. 13.

‡ Job. i. 15.

entire Southern hemisphere. Ishmael, as it had been previously revealed in the prophecy concerning him, became a great nation; and in this new form of his continued existence were merged the idiosyncrasies of the original and isolated type. In other words, the individual, ever unreliable, treacherous, and anti-christian, incapable alike of a permanent adherence to a treaty or of a continued submission to a ruler, when once fully subdued and constituting with his fellows a great nationality, made it with respect to all other nations just what the individual man had previously been with respect to all other individuals. It became the world's disturbing centre, and broke in alike for centuries upon all its harmonies.

The identity of the same people in successive ages is more than conventional or legal; it has its seat in the constitution of things, in nature itself, and belongs to a nation in its successive generations, just as it belongs to a man in the successive periods of his life. His body is not composed of the same particles at fifty of which it was at twenty; his mind has, likewise, had an infinite succession of volitions and emotions; and yet, though in so many respects a new and a different creature,

he still is the same, and is so held to be, both in law and in fact. "Who ever perished being innocent?" Under the government of a righteous God punishment pursues the guilty. Amalek was cut off by Saul for murders committed by a previous generation four hundred years before. (1491 B.C.) Ex. xvii. 14-16: "The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (1070 B.C.) 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have." Verse 9: "But Saul and the people spared Agag." Verses 10, 11: "Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king." Verses 32, 33: "Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said,

Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal." Great social wrongs, unredressed and unregretted, and still repeated by a seed of evil-doers, demanded the providential visitation. The children had risen up "an increase of sinful men to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord."* Samuel reminded Agag of this; and, while we do not understand him to deny his connection with the guilt of a former age, he assures him that he suffers for his own:—"As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women." Such is the unity and responsibility of each distinct race.

Destitute of all fraternal loves and local attachments, his hand against every man, an outlaw and a robber, Ishmael entered on his chosen domain and became the lord and the terror of the wilderness. On its wild clans, and on the twelve powerful tribes and the great nation that sprang from him, he stamped in indelible characters his own native love of war and plunder and his ever-living animosity to the blessed Messiah.

* Num. xxxii. 14.

CHAPTER III.

THE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONALITY OF ISHMAEL.

“The gather’d guilt of elder times
Shall reproduce itself in crimes.”

GAL. iv. 24, 25: “Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” The allegory has a wide range. There is not only more in it than appears in the original narrative, but in this instance it is perhaps unusually comprehensive, and includes the personal rejection of Ishmael and that of his posterity, as also those other descendants of the patriarch who, moved with envy, delivered their Lord to a cruel death, persecuted those born after the Spirit, and were become “contrary to God and contrary to all men.”*

“This Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and

* 1 Thess. ii. 15.

answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Having rejected her Lord, (thus Paul instructs the church in the above-quoted passage,) Jerusalem, amid her faded glories as a doomed city, was for this in bondage with her misguided offspring. In a few short years she too, like the son of the bondwoman, would become out-cast from patrimonial possessions and spiritual privileges, and be houseless, the sport of oppression and want, in that wide wilderness in which she should wander and perish for ages. The wrath of Roman legions in her spoliation and in her wo would but express toward her, as did Sarah's severities toward Ishmael, the punitive justice of offended Heaven. And when the day should ultimately come for Isaac's effectual calling and spiritual birth,—when, raised from the slumber of centuries and weaned from the love of the world, his return should commence, and the great feast should be spread in his native mountains, and he should be about to be solemnly installed anew in the blessed line of the spiritual succession,—then (as we understand the prophet*) shall the scoffing and per-

* Isaiah xxv. 5-8; Dan. xi. 44, 45.

secuting Ishmael again and for the last time become an outcast from the patriarch's down-trodden heritage. The power of Sarah's prophetic curse shall revive afresh amid the ruins of her fallen towers, the perils of her returning children, and prove mightier than the armies of the aliens.

Ishmael was, according to the prediction, to "dwell in the presence of all his brethren."* And, as the great conquerors of the world have ever failed to subdue Arabia,—as still, from the earliest times till now, the Arabs have watched the traveller who has crossed their unprofitable sands and made him pay tribute,—as they have escaped successively the rule of the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans,—it has been supposed that this passage was intended as a prophetic description of the future independence of their wild tribes, from age to age, in their own hereditary dominions. "Arabia, though its frontier-provinces experienced some vicissitudes, preserved in the depths of its deserts its primitive character and independence; nor had its nomadic tribes ever bent their haughty necks to servitude."†

Gibbon, in his great eagerness to cast discredit

* Gen. xvi. 12.

† Irving.

on this prophecy as fairly furnishing satisfactory evidence in favour of the inspiration of the Scriptures, first sneers at the idea and then denies the fact of the continued independence of the Ishmaelites; but, before he closes this extraordinary paragraph, he indirectly retracts and fully contradicts his first statement. "The perpetual independence of the Arabs has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives; and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle in favour of the posterity of Ishmael. Some exceptions, that can neither be dismissed nor eluded, render this mode of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous. The kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the sultans of Egypt, and the Turks; the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant; and the Roman province of Arabia embraced the peculiar wilderness in which Ishmael and his sons must have pitched their tents in the face of their brethren. Yet these exceptions are temporary or local: the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies. The arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan,

could never achieve the conquest of Arabia. The present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction; but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people whom it is dangerous to provoke and fruitless to attack.”*

Others suggest that the text simply describes the place of their abode as it related geographically to the land of Canaan. It should be “to the east of their brethren.” The meaning is confessedly obscure; and, though inclined to adopt as most correct the view first named, yet, were either opinion the received one, it would not affect the obvious meaning of the other portions of this remarkable prophecy. If, as we have seen, the historic record, after you exhaust its literal meaning, is also allegorical, and comprehends in it even the lineal descendants of Isaac, who, in imitation of their scoffing brother, turn their hand against every man, then, though the Bedouin tribes who are the present robber-lords of Paran may be the lineal descendants of Ishmael, still, the allegory fairly comprehends all the tribes to whom Ishmael became related by intermarriage and by mastery, together with any other of the

* Gibbon.

descendants of Abraham by Keturah, whose tribal life was finally merged and lost in his own.

It is enough, indeed, for our purpose, that the characteristics of Ishmael—his love of war and booty, his irreconcilable hatred of the Christian religion, and his disposition ever to persecute its nominal or its real disciples—have impressed themselves alike on all the races united by his descendants under the sway of the Koran; enough, that Mohammed attracted to his standard the contending factions that descended from his renowned progenitor, and, out of these wild elements, formed and founded his empire; enough, that throughout Asia, Africa, and a part of Europe, other nations were confessedly lost in it, as rivers and streams are lost in the sea.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS EVIL DESTINY.

“The Maker justly claims the world he made :
In this the right of Providence is laid ;
Its sacred majesty through all depends
On using second means to work his ends.”

PARNELL.

WHAT a sweet relief is given to that spiritual night which stretches its gloomy curtains from the fall to the resurrection-morn, when, one by one, the living types of the Messiah, in an unbroken succession, springing up amid whispers of comfort and angel footfalls, span the flight of intervening ages with the ever-recurring evidences of a coming and a glorious dawn ! It is among these that even Ishmael, during seventeen years, holds his elevated position. The patriarch regards him as his heir ; and, as he was his first-born son, he continued to be the visible representative of Christ, in the succession, until Isaac, by divine direction, took his place. His rejection, however, as a progenitor of a coming Saviour, did not neces-

sarily remove him from his saving interest in a Redeemer. By the divine will he fell from the succession; but by his own fault he fell from the covenant, and sank, a baleful meteor, to the earth. Obviously, however, he is a being, though never so evil, whose existence is invested with no ordinary interest; since that wide world into which he is banished is to be made the theatre of his wonderful providential mission. God's kingdom is immeasurably great; and, in its administration by the infinite One, no instructions are gathered from the lessons of experience to modify or change original arrangements. Indeed, all the innumerable details of the comprehensive rule are original and immutable, lying back of the genesis of the heavens and the earth in the fiat of the uncreated mind. In a kingdom so vast, and in events whose origin must remain hidden in the bosom of remote ages, it is not strange to see things that to human sagacity appear useless or even injurious,—blots on the cheek of nature, imperfections in divine creations, connecting themselves only with the chariot of God as mire on the pavement or dust from its wheels. But the appearances are most deceptive. The globe itself, curtained in night, flew for unknown ages on its desolate track, with

its elements slowly maturing, that they might be ready at the appointed time to be formed into a habitation for its living generations. And in its present state, with its ocean-beds, volcanic fires, atmospheric plagues, and mighty annual deposits of perished life, it is but maturing for another change in which, purified by the flame that consumes it, it shall be reproduced and covered in every part of it with more than its primeval bloom and beauty. In forming an opinion, then, of the utility of things in God's immense and eternal kingdom, we should not forget the lessons of humility which lie all along our daring flight upward toward that point, immeasurably distant, which separates the wisdom of God from the ignorance of a creature. The long preparation of Ishmael's descendants for their mission of wo, and the long separation of Isaac from Canaan, and the long night that settled for ages over Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, are but preparatory processes to the introduction of a better and a brighter day. What though we cannot account for these mysterious footprints in the ways of heaven? what though the gulfs we attempt to fathom are of an unknown depth and their unsightly bosoms covered with a pall? in the fulness of time, the great results will have

been secured, and God shall say, "Let there be light." It is a voluntary folly in any to hide from his eyes the agency of Heaven in all this world's beauty or deformity, in all its good or evil. "I form the light and create the darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Night and day, volcanoes and Edens, war and peace, demons and angels, hell and heaven, are alike his creations, are alike subservient to his ultimate will. Moses was born and reared in the court of the Pharaohs, and, for eighty years, kept under processes of discipline which fitted him for his future mission. The broken remnants of partially-subjugated tribes were reserved in Canaan to be thorns in the sides and briers in the eyes of offending Israel. And when Ishmael was banished, and wandered in the solitudes of Paran, he was for the same reason not left to perish. He was a providential instrument, and his was, though an evil, yet a protected, life. In that thirsty desert, surrounded by interminable and burning sands, without shelter from the sun, and worn out in a long and fruitless search for water, he fainted, and was left under a shrub to die; and, but for a divine interposition, this had been his end and the point at which we might

now have commenced to write a totally different history of Asia and of the world. Great events were suspended on the restoration of that wasting breath. Hence God said to his mother, "Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make of him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer." Yes, God was with the lad, as he is with the tiger and his cubs, the earthquake, the pestilence, and the tornado. He was with him to make him a minister of his providence,—to fulfil its decrees and to inflict its chastisements on the guilty.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATIONALITY OF ISHMAEL OBTAINING DEVELOPMENT IN MOHAMMED.

“Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride.”

BYRON.

THE transition of the descendants of Ishmael from a state of extreme personal independence and of selfish isolation to that of an organized and a united people was effected by Mohammed in the seventh century. The religious creed of this extraordinary man was artfully adapted to the native and long-cherished tastes of his countrymen. It turned their guilty love of war and spoil and their long-indulged animosity to the true Messiah into the elements of success, threw open the gates of unbelieving provinces and kingdoms to invasion, and doomed them alike to tribute, the Koran, or the sword. An army, irresistible from its fanatic courage if not from its disciplined valour, sprang “from the dust of his feet” and took peace from the world. The fierce contentions of twenty-seven centuries

had been, up to this period, either the resistance of intruders on their appropriated soil, or the bloody strifes of individuals, families, and tribes. A spirit had reigned which had hitherto acknowledged no code of justice or of honour, no common tribunal to which the weak could appeal for redress against the strong,—none, but that which each one carried in the nice appreciations of his own mind or in the sure and sudden stroke of his scimitar. Falling back upon his tact or courage, the injured committed the arbitrations or the inflictions of the *lex talionis* to no other hands than his own. An unrelenting foe, he watched with calm and unsuspected vigilance the obnoxious party, for the opportunity of successful revenge. His victim fell in the very act of embracing a supposed friend. Life's warm current often purpled the lonely heath with a deeper dye; and the blood of war, shed in peace, was often put without remorse "on his girdle and in his shoes." The traditions of the Arabs recount the occurrence of seventeen hundred battles which preceded the birth of their prophet. Up to this period Ishmael's hand had ever been put forth, either in self-defence, or it had been stained with fraternal blood.

The first outbreak in which his wild descendants became formidable and left their burning solitudes to interrupt the peace of nations was under the discipline of Mohammed. He breathed through "their roving bands the spirit of a common fanaticism, suppressed their domestic feuds, and turned their united strength against mankind." How wonderful the prophecy!—"He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him:" Gen. xvi. 12. "Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation:" Gen. xvii. 20. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit:" Rev. ix. 1. According to this prophecy, a great national life had been communicated. The facts of history show that it gained ultimate development in the Arabian impostor. He possessed the secret of power. "To HIM was given the key of the bottomless pit." He was born A.D. 569. And, though his parents died when he was yet an infant, his uncles were rich and noble, and the most considerable of these became his guardian. At the age of twenty-

five he married Kadijah, a widow of rank and fortune, and at once took his station among the proudest of his countrymen. His admirers are fond of representing him as having had a well-knit and vigorous frame; as insinuating and persuasive; with a world of intelligence in the dark eye that lighted up the ever-varying features of his expressive countenance; with vocal cadences of rare harmony, that swept the secret chords of human sympathies and gave character and sway to his slightest utterances; with a memory most retentive; with a judgment invested with an intuitive maturity,—a maturity reached by others only after long and careful study; as generous and self-possessed:—in a word, as having had in himself that wonderful concentration of all those qualities by which he was enabled to rise to power, by which he became the profound master of uncultivated tribes, on whose credulity he knew how to practise, and whose ruinous indominancy he could discipline and wield. This, I think, cannot be justly regarded as a mere fancy sketch. Providential instruments have ever had impressed upon them the law of a most perfect adaptation to their ends; and for this reason this instrument was fitted to become at once the idol and the oracle of the

desert, the terror and the scourge of erring Christendom. The secret of his power was, in this and in every other respect, the secret decree of heaven.

This will appear all the more obvious when you consider how numerous the obstacles that barricaded his way to the throne and repressed—almost fatally—his proud aspirations after dominion. In his infancy he is an orphan. His parents leave him without even the means of subsistence. All that falls to him from patrimonial estates is five camels and a maid-servant. At the age of forty he had, after most earnest toil, made but three converts: one of these was his wife. He proclaimed the unity of God,—an offensive dogma among the polytheists of Arabia. They were enraged, and sought his life. Among both his executioners and his judges it was arranged that a sword from each tribe should be buried in his heart, that their kindred tribes might mutually bear his blood if his death should rouse to war, or, as superstition might have suggested, mutually share the benefit of the expiation at the altars of their gods.

At the dead hour of night he made his escape from his dwelling, now narrowly watched, and unexpectedly eluded the vigi-

lance of the disappointed and remorseless Koreishites. Accompanied by a single friend, he concealed himself for three days in a cavern in Mount Thor. The Koreishites explored every supposed hiding-place in the vicinity of Mecca,—came to the very mouth of the cave in which he was lying concealed. Here a spider's web and a pigeon's nest,* “artfully arranged,” proved a successful deception. His unsuspecting foes turned away. The next morning finds him springing from the top of the rock to his camel's back and flying for safety to Medina. The quick tramp of pursuers at this critical moment startles his ear: his foes are indeed close upon him. On that unbounded plain, as far as the eye could reach, not a hill, not a mound, not a shrub, offers a hiding-place to the exposed and defenceless fugitive. The nest of a bird, the web of a spider even, are not now his frail protectors,—cannot now mislead and turn away his armed foes. But, as Ishmael had escaped death even when the chill of its last agony froze his blood, so is Mohammed also destined to escape,

* “During the three days they had lain hid here, a spider, they tell us, had spun its web over the mouth of the cave, and a pigeon laid two eggs near it.”—*Ockley*.

since his, too, is a protected life. His secret mission it was that threw a spell upon his captors. His fine figure, generous gifts, fair promises, and insinuating address, abated their resentment. It is said, also, that the horse of the fierce Soraka fell at this juncture, and, regarding it as an evil omen, the savage returned with his band. It was as though it had been by a divine intervention that he escaped; and such, I think, we are bound to regard it. No doubt the Koreish troop were amazed even at themselves, and at an event which the Mohammedans have ever since deemed miraculous. "In this eventful moment the lance of an Arab might have changed the history of the world."*

After sixteen days Mohammed reached Medina in safety. He was mounted on a she-camel. It was all of this world he had retained; it was all the throne he had to occupy; but he assumed, as far as circumstances admitted, the ensigns of royalty, and entered Medina with an unfurled turban for his banner, suspended from the point of Boreida's lance, and a palm-leaf canopy held over his head by his followers. His train and body-guard amounted now

* Gibbon.

to seventy men. In this city his reverses terminated: his converts rallied around him, Medina acknowledged his mission, and in seven years from the Hegira* he returned to Mecca and entered it in triumph. He had now become both the prophet and the prince of his converted countrymen,—the former and the leader of the first general confederacy among the descendants of Ishmael. Fierce tribes, that force could not subdue nor fear intimidate, were under him, made the victims of a despotism to which superstition imparted an absoluteness and a control more intimate and effective than any other. His body, until his death, was regarded as invulnerable and immortal. When he died, the reported event was rejected as a fable; and, while he lived, every wish, every motion, was carefully observed and religiously venerated.†

Many pages have been written for the purpose of tracing and restricting his sudden elevation and wonderful successes to second causes; but to all this it is sufficient to reply, that second causes were divinely arranged and

* The era of the flight from Mecca to Medina.

† “The hair of his head that falls,” said an eye-witness, “is picked up by his devout soldiers.”

made to minister to the will of heaven, while they, at the same time, ministered to the elevation of the impostor. But for this, he might have died in his cradle. But for this, the web of a spider would not have deceived, nor his eloquent tongue or the fall of a horse palsied the arm of those who, thirsting for his blood, had overtaken his flying steps.

CHAPTER VI.

ISHMAEL AND MOHAMMED.—CONTINUED.

“There is a fire and motion of the soul
Which will not dwell in its own narrow being,
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure.” BYRON.

THE ninth chapter of the Apocalypse is generally admitted to relate to the Saracenic and Turkish empires. The correctness of this view I do not think it necessary to defend, believing that the few who dissent from it will be more likely to be convinced by illustrations of the prophecy, drawn from the facts of history, than by any direct attack upon their opinions. An error is often most successfully refuted by a clear presentation of the truth.

“And the fifth angel sounded; and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to *him* was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace:” Rev. ix. 1, 2. With a key the door is opened, the apartment is entered. It

is the emblem of power. He to whom heaven gives it is destined to have dominion. It will fit the wards of every lock; the bolts must give way before it. The expression "To him was given" suggests that the agent designated is a man; and the word "star" that he was an illustrious person. The passage points us to a distinguished individual providentially called to execute the divine will. Mohammed not only descended from Ishmael and from Abraham, but he belonged to the Koreish line,* and to that branch of it regarded not only as the most considerable for its nobility, wealth, and power, but also most remarkable as having had committed to its keeping, for many generations, the sacred temple of Mecca. Amid its mysterious ceremonies Mohammed had been instructed and reared, and from his youth had been known throughout Arabia as its most accomplished and most devoted hierophant. The same star that falls rises and opens the pit. Loosened from its zone in the Abrahamic covenant, it descends to make the world the future theatre of its baleful influences; and, as John the Baptist was but the

* He descended from Hashem, the father of the Hashemites, and a prince of great distinction in Arabia in his day.

reproduction of Elijah, so Ishmael reappears also in his successor. The restless energy of the long-silent founder of the robber-kingdom starts from the ashes of his sepulchre and walks abroad again in the hardness and daring of his martial son. The mighty progenitor marked out for himself his own track,—stamped his own character on more than fifty generations. His renowned descendant had the same gift of power, invented the dark sentences of Hara, and founded an empire in blood. By the retained rite of circumcision, as well as by the testimony of tradition, he and his associate dwellers in the desert have justly claimed to be the lineal descendants of Ishmael. If the rite of circumcision among the dispersed Jews proves their descent from Abraham, then the same rite in immemorial usage among the large and powerful families of the Koreishites should be received as equally satisfactory evidence of their descent from the same original stock. Palestine and Arabia have alike the seal of circumcision and are alike under the rule of the patriarch's seed.

“And there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace.” Mecca, the sacred city of the Mohammedans, is situated

in the centre of a barren plain and surrounded by naked and precipitous mountains. Within its walls is the Kaaba, the sacred house or temple of the Arabs, built, as their traditions affirm, by Abraham and Ishmael, and according to a heaven-descended model. Within the same enclosure is situated the memorable well Zem-zem, said to have been the one pointed out by the angel to Hagar when her child was dying with thirst. In the walls of the Kaaba was placed the sacred stone that, tradition says, came down from heaven. Laying aside for the time their weapons and their feuds, the idolaters were accustomed to meet here annually, and from the earliest times, for the worship of their idols. Seven times they made the circuit of the temple, and, having kissed the black stone* in the walls, they went forth to resume their weapons and their wars. This desolate spot—the centre and

* The black stone, which the Mohammedans held in great reverence and believed to be one of the stones of Paradise which fell down with Adam from heaven, is a small stone set in silver and fixed in the southeast corner of the Kaaba, about four feet from the ground. It is said to be white within, but to have turned black on the outside by the sins of the people, or, more probably, by the kisses of the pilgrims."—*Ockley's Saracens*, Part III.

support of a dark superstition—was the place of Mohammed's nativity; and the gloomy pit on the slopes of Mount Hara, hard by, the crater whence issued his desolating creed. The character of this creed, its unscrupulous perversions of truth, the opposition to the Messiah which it inculcates, and the uncleanness and cruelty to which it incites, are alike in keeping with the known sympathies of the father of lies, are alike suggestive of pandemonial influences. The surrounding desert is likewise a vast solitude, without either water or verdure, and covered with loose sands. To these the tornado sometimes imparts the motions of a troubled sea, in whose burning bosom caravans and armies perish. The winds—especially those that prevail from the southeast—are usually burdened with heat, and are often destructive of animal life. “At eleven o'clock,” says Bruce, “while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris, our guide, cried out, with a loud voice, ‘Fall upon your faces, for here is the Simoom!’ I saw from the southeast a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or

thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor or purple haze which I saw was indeed passed, but the light air which still blew was of a heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it; nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards."

These hot blasts might well be regarded as the fiery gusts that rush up from the prison-house of the lost. The hills rise abruptly from the cheerless plain. No forests protect, with their grateful shade, from the blaze of noon; no rivers cross the weary track; they are absorbed in sandy basins of unknown depths; and, when an oasis is reached, the springs that rise to the surface are brackish and offensive, from the saline or bituminous deposits through which they have made their secret way. It is a region in contrast with

every other inhabited by man. If, amid the flowers and fruits, the verdure, salubrity, and melody, the gorgeousness of the skies and of the plumage of unknown birds, in the New World, the early navigators believed themselves in the immediate vicinity of the garden of Eden, and made its precise situation the object of persevering search, then might the Evangelist, in his vision of the Kaaba, as it presented itself to him, surrounded by no signs of vegetable life, standing on deep beds of sulphur and of salt, overshadowed by desolate mountains, in one of which opened the gloomy cell of the great deceiver of the southern hemisphere, describe it as the hold of foul spirits, the open crater of the bottomless pit.

There are also traceable resemblances between fallen spirits and the gaunt and wily banditti that lie in wait amid the dusky haunts of the desert. Their fierce black eyes, elfish locks, high cheek-bones, and dragon-teeth, warn you at their approach of the neighbourhood of evil. Such faces never mask a heart of love. They are the outward signs of the long-indulged impulses of cruelty and selfishness. They are the designations of a race whom heaven restrains not. Their home has ever been one of unatoned wrong. From it pity fled when

the scoffer set his foot in it; since when its retaliations, enraged into fiercer reprisals at every turn, have arrested in rivers of kindred blood an increase which, but for this, would of itself, in its own native outworkings, have proved fatal to Eastern civilization.

Thus, in a thirsty and boundless waste, swept by fiery winds, traversed by sharp and naked mountains, the hold of superstition, deceit, and murder, the patrimony of outcast generations, John saw a master-spirit rise, open its pandemonial gates, and let loose its hitherto pent-up furies upon erring Christendom.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SECRET OF MOHAMMED'S SUCCESS.

“To him was given the key of the bottomless pit.”—ST. JOHN.

“The sword is the key of heaven and of hell.”—MOHAMMED.

A GREAT idea, clearly brought out by a master-mind, possesses often a volcanic power. Of this kind was that which Moses presented in the court of the Pharaohs. It asserted the supremacy of God over all kings, kingdoms, and laws, and demanded, on that single ground, the immediate and unconditional liberation of his people. “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel : Let my people go.” Thus was asserted God’s unbounded and righteous dominion. It was a lost truth. Its reproduction convulsed the world: proud kings were awed, and idolatrous kingdoms toppled and fell before it. In that great idea God “beheld and drove asunder the nations. He uttered his voice; the earth melted.”

A great idea gained distinct utterance in the commencement of the Christian era. It an-

nounced the righteousness of faith,—a lost though a vital truth. It agitated the commonwealth of Rome to its political and moral centres as though it had been the voice of God, and changed the religions and habits of all its provinces. The reproduction of the same idea in the sixteenth century produced the greatest and the most desirable revolution of modern times.

When Mohammed gave himself up to the devices or the rhapsodies of Hara, his countrymen were the worshippers of the luminaries of heaven, and of numerous other deities. Three hundred and sixty idols, of every conceivable variety of form and ritual known to the Orientals, filled the niches and adorned the pedestals of the temple of Mecca. And throughout all the world, in the East and in the West, wherever the visible church had spread her faith, with limited exceptions, there had sprung up a disguised paganism. Retaining the names of things divine, the church had changed their meaning. Her images, the objects of her adoration, were not called idols, but saints; not named Jupiter and Minerva, but Peter and Mary, and after the canonized worthies of her communion. True religion had fled to the mountains. Idolatry had been restored. That

we may understand the providential reasons for the elevation of the hierophant of the Kaaba and of the cavern, at this juncture, to his throne, we should not forget or overlook the concomitant universal prevalence of idolatry, nor the coincident revelation of the man of sin, who had just then become unmasked by being proclaimed universal bishop, and had commenced openly to exercise his spiritual lordship by enforcing the worship of pieces of wood, wafer gods, and dead men's bones, provoking by his idolatries and oppressions the retributions of Heaven.

The creed of the wily Arab was not the offspring of chance, but one in the formation of which his sagacity had been providentially instructed, and which was destined, in working out its own hidden life, to develop and fulfil the mission to which he and his race had been so wonderfully reserved. That creed contained a grand and an eternal truth,—a truth simple, sublime, and in harmony with the teachings of Abraham, Moses, and Messias, and yet a truth that put him in debate with the world. “There is no God but one!” was the short but sententious utterance that shook on their polluted thrones the idols of Arabia and of Christendom; that originated in the

desert that fierce civil war which ended in the triumph of Mohammed, and in the union of its segregated tribes under the government of a single chief. Persuasion and miracles, he maintained, had been the abortive alternatives in the gentler mission of Jesus; but more effective measures were now demanded, and Heaven had committed to his hand the sword. With it he was required to chastise and reform the worlds idolatrous kingdoms.

Truth is often essential to success,—even when error mars and defaces it. The great truth that headed the creed of Mohammed turned a daring fiction into a probable verity. Both were necessary to create an army of fanatics and to found the Saracenic empire. He began his mission, like Moses, with the professed sentences of inspiration: but no signs attended him; no sea opened at the exodus of a nation; no mountain, wrapped in fire and darkness, became for a whole year his mighty oracle. His fables about Gabriel's midnight visits to his cavern, bringing with him the chapters of the Koran, and of his ride on his mysterious Borak from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence through the seven heavens, where he passed the veil of unity, approached within two bowshots of the throne, and felt a cold that pierced his

heart as his shoulder was touched by the hand of God, were esteemed fables, and awakened for him the scorn and persecution of his countrymen. Ten years he toiled at Mecca. His inventions and his eloquence won him few converts; yea, rather alienated his friends and exasperated his foes. At length, abandoned by all, he mounted his camel and fled for his life. His mission thus far had proved a total failure, and he must have perished in oblivion but for the addenda to his creed,—an afterthought to which he is now at length driven by defeat and despair.

He was now become sufficiently enlightened as to the hopelessness of his cause if he did not at once resort to the alternative of force. Moses and our blessed Lord gave credibility to their missions by their miracles; but Mohammed was but a pretender, and could succeed in but one way. When this idea had at length struggled into distinct being in the mind of the forlorn deceiver, he recovered at once his fallen courage. One can hardly fail to see his eye kindle and his bosom swell as the accents fall from his lips:—"The sword is the key of heaven and of hell." As he grasps its hilt, it becomes in his vision instinctive with his destiny. "A drop of blood shed

in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer." The gulf that had opened its smouldering chasm at his feet is thus passed at a single bound. "Mohammed had now a dream that he held in his hand the key of the Kaaba, and that he and his men made the circuit round it and performed all the ceremonies of the pilgrimage. Having told his dream next morning, he and his followers were all in high spirits upon it, taking it for an omen that they should shortly be masters of Mecca."*

In commemoration of this dream of the key, the Andalusian Moors suspended one on the arch of their Alhambra, and bore the sign of one painted on their standards. He had now found out the secret of power. He grasped the key; the bolt yielded to its magic touch; the obstruction gave way amid the successive shocks of a great social revolution. He drew his sword to enforce his creed. The idolaters resisted. Three hundred and thirteen armed fanatics were all that supported his infant empire. Undismayed by superior numbers, though in peril of his life, his companions overpowered and falling around him, he is nevertheless

* Ockley, p. 46: 5th London edition, (Bohn,) 1848.

equal to the terrible exigency. Springing to the back of his white mule, he rallies his followers, rushes upon his foes, and, in imitation of the ancient prophets, casts dust in their faces. Superstition now comes to his aid: it oppresses his enemies. They fly in their turn; and, in the very moment of defeat, the impostor is suddenly victorious, and that almost without striking another blow. Amia, a surviving idolater, when pointed to the pit at Beder in which Mohammed had cast the bodies of his fallen foes, uttered the death-wail of Arabian paganism. The courage of the lonely chief spent itself in pathetic lamentation rather than in an appeal to the sword:—

“Alas! the peers and princes of the people,—
How fallen at Beder and at Kandali!
All night exposed lie there both old and young,
Naked and breathless.
Oh, what a change has come to Mecca’s vale!
Even sandy desert plains are drown’d in tears.”*

But larger armies rally; marches and countermarches, battles and sieges, follow each other in quick succession. The alarm of war falls back deep into the interior; dusky warriors rush up from their wild retreats; ten

thousand watch-fires glimmer at the siege of Mecca. The idolaters are everywhere routed. The lieutenants of Mohammed spread his sway from the Gulf of Persia to the Red Sea. The idols are destroyed, the altars of superstition demolished; and, amid the crash of arms and the cloud of battle that settled dark over the bosom of the desert, the false prophet established his creed and stood at the head of an army of devotees, the conqueror of Arabia, the founder of a new kingdom, the author and propagator of a new faith.

Surrounding nations did not understand the nature of that fierce domestic war that shook the depth of the wilderness with the tramp of camels and horses, and that skirted the horizon with its long lines of tents and camp-fires. All was indistinct; Mohammed, his creed, his assault upon the religion of his native land, all were invisible to the distant beholder at the time. The signs of tumult and of war, the progress of a great and destructive conflict sweeping over the entire peninsula,—this was visible, but visible only as it stood alone, without explanation of its causes and aims,—visible, “as the smoke of a great furnace” rising from the bosom of the desert.

CHAPTER VIII.

ISLAMISM A PERVERSION OF CHRISTIANITY.

“A king, understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.”

DAN. viii. 23

THROUGHOUT the Koran, in maintaining the unity of God, Mohammed in almost every chapter assails the divinity of Christ. While he insists, in his opposition to the Jews, that Jesus was not an impostor, and holds them to a terrible account for what he declares to have been an abortive attempt to put him to death, he also insists, with a still greater earnestness and frequency, that he was a mere man, though a prophet, and that to maintain that he was the Son, companion, or equal of God, deserved not only death but the everlasting torments of hell. He makes himself our Lord's equal, if not his superior, and turns his promise of another comforter into a prediction that relates to himself. He sets aside necessarily the expiatory nature of the crucifixion, inasmuch as he denies the fact; asserting that our Lord was

not crucified at all, the Jews having mistaken another for him. While, in the apprehensions of his unenlightened mind, the divine unity seemed ever in conflict with his deity and lordship, his actual crucifixion detracted also largely from his glory as a prophet. Nor does it appear ever to have occurred to him that the deity of Christ could possibly be held by any one who did not of necessity at the same time repudiate the favourite dogma of his creed. He therefore doomed all who held it to the sword and to the flames. His grand idea not only threw up a black cloud upon the face of the sun; it also obscured the whole atmosphere of truth. He maintained that the Koran came from heaven and was sent down for the confirmation of the Scriptures and for their true and ultimate interpretation.

The sun and the air are in this prophecy representative terms. Their obscuration proceeds from the well-known source of opposition to things heavenly and divine. Christ is the Sun of righteousness and the glory of revealed religion. The Holy Scriptures, which contain and exhibit him, are the atmosphere illuminated by him. And, as the "dark sentences" of Hara confused and perverted their testimony, they were represented as the in-

ventions of infernal malevolence, the smoke of the bottomless pit. The Koran is a reproduction of many of the facts contained in Moses and in the Evangelists, but so modified as to suit the sinister purposes of the impostor. Everywhere the unity of God is asserted and idolatry condemned. Even Jesus is made to deny that he ever taught his own divinity or ever authorized the divine honours paid to him. And Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, are all brought up as witnesses, and each one in his turn is made to testify to the divine unity and to endorse the mission of the prophet of Mecca. As he had no miracles to fall back upon, he thus fell back upon the authority of those who had, and, in this manner, with a consummate artfulness, turned the sacred books of both Jews and Christians into witnesses to the truth of his own dogma.

It is thus that the sun and the air are darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. A room is darkened when you put out the candle; a city, when you turn off its light; but if a black pall be hung on the face of the sun the whole world is darkened. Though the existence and the unity of God are assumed and taught in the Scriptures, as they are also in the

whole universe of material things, yet the grand idea that ever occurs and that ever lights up and adorns the sacred page is that of atonement. When sin had entered the world and Eden and hope were lost, embodied in the first promise, it whispered comfort to the race and broke the silence of despair. And from this blessed hour it began to unfold and expand and impress itself on human convictions.

It glimmered in sacrificial fires, for ages, over whole countries and from a thousand altars. From the exodus to the crucifixion, it shed upon Mount Zion the never-ceasing sacrifice of blood. It reflected its significance and its remedial glory from all the incidents of the inspired history,—in Noah's ark, the offering of Isaac, the brazen serpent, the falling manna, the smitten rock. The high-priest, the garments that he wore, and the ritual that regulated and directed his mediations, were its "image and superscription." The tabernacle, the temple, the lamb, the scape-goat, the altar, the mercy-seat, all, all were shadows of Him who by one offering should forever perfect all them that are sanctified. He was the grand basis of the everlasting covenant; and when those holy bards, inspired to sing of things divine, rose to the loftiest range of thought and

melody, it was "when they saw his glory and spake of him." "To him gave all the prophets witness." His death and resurrection, his love, his conquests, his mediatorial reign and work, permeate the pages of the Old Testament. In the New, the four Evangelists furnish us with his biography; the Acts of the Apostles, with the testimony of the Spirit to his mission of mercy. The Epistles contain a formal statement and defence of the expiatory nature of his sacrifice and intercession, and, from first to last, the sum of the inspired utterance is that of atonement made, a ransom found, a remedy provided, a Messiah offered up, a high-priest passed into the heavens,—Jesus, the Son of God, able to save to the uttermost, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession.

Take this away, and, while the idea of the divine unity would still stand impressed on the sacred page as it does on the face of nature, yet there would be there no recorded hope for lost man; its lustre would be tarnished, its harmony and its benediction lost. While it preached to me most incoherently of unity and purity, it would present to my wistful search no Redeemer, and leave me in despair. It is thus that the glory of our Lord is obscured by the effusions of Hara. He is

not indeed denied a place in the prophetic galaxy, but he is denied to have been the Son of God in his incarnation, and an expiatory sacrifice in his crucifixion. The Scriptures are in like manner not denied, but professedly confirmed, by the Koran, while throughout their entire and illustrious testimony hell spreads out her torn cloud, intercepting the rays of the Sun of righteousness and hanging an atmosphere heavy and dark between earth and heaven. Ah me! thou blessed apostle of Jesus! that were indeed the smoke of a pandemon furnace that could thus throw a shadow on the glory of our Lord and obscure the effulgence of his word.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SARACENS—THEIR FANATIC COURAGE.

“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.”—
REV. ix. 3.

AN obvious truth—a truth lying at the foundation of all enlightened conviction and worship—formed the basis for the errors of the superstructure in the religion of the false prophet. All attempts to refute the dogma—a dogma made prominent in every ground of invasion or treaty of peace, in every orison or battle-cry—were ever a failure. It challenged the assent of Jew and Gentile as to an intuitive truth that carried with it its own evidence, and that imposed on all the obligations of an unhesitating faith. Joshua had waved the sword of doom over Canaan for denying it; and Arabia, it was now affirmed, was called upon, by the last and the most illustrious of heaven’s prophetic missionaries, to maintain in the earth “the worship of one sole and mighty God.” The truth contained in the creed made

the error respectable; the error made war a duty; and the rewards of booty and of paradise made the unitarian army destructive and terrible, if not invincible.

“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.”

“I swear,” said the impostor, “by the mountain upon which God spake to Moses, by what is contained in the book written in parchment, by the first temple of Mecca, by the arches of the heavens, and by the sea full of water, that God is one sole God, and the punishment promised to unbelievers is infallible. . . . They shall be precipitated in the fire of hell. . . . Who are the more happy?—they who are in our felicity, or such as are near to Zacon, the tree of hell? This tree cometh out of the bottom of hell; it riseth high, and the branches themselves resemble the heads of devils. The damned shall eat the fruit thereof. They shall drink boiling water. . . . The fruit of the tree of hell, called Zacon, shall serve for fruit to the wicked. It shall boil in their bellies like pitch or water. They shall cry, ‘Take the wicked; drag them into the fire of hell! pour upon their heads all manner of torments!’ It shall be said to them, ‘Taste the pains of hell!’ . . . The righteous

shall be in delicious places, in gardens adorned with fountains. They shall be clothed with purple. They shall behold each other face to face. We will assemble them with women pure and clean, who shall have most beautiful eyes. They shall have fruits savoury and delicious, of all seasons. They shall never die. . . . They shall be clothed with silk, repose on stately beds, and shall not be troubled either with the heat of the sun or the cold of the moon. They shall be under the shadow of the trees of paradise. There shall they gather fruits as they stand, sit, or lie down. . . . Whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven him: at the day of judgment his wounds shall be odoriferous as musk, and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of the cherubim." Such motives engendered in the warm climate and in the warm constitutions of the Arabs a fanatic and a voluptuous zeal, that sent them in swarms from their barren and burning sands to ravage and lay waste the fair provinces of Christendom.

When Syria had fallen, and Africa had been spoiled, and the Atlantic coast had been reached, it is said that "Akbah spurred his horse into the waves, and, raising his eyes to

heaven, exclaimed, ‘Great God! if my course were not stopped by this sea, I would still go on to the unknown kingdoms of the West, preaching the unity of thy holy name, and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship any other gods but thee!’”*

The emotion of Akbah was common to the masses composing the Saracenic armies. The woes of hell and the blessings of a sensual paradise were alike motives of amazing power, drawn from the invisible world, to induce the lover of war and plunder to follow the martial seer and his lieutenants.

Both worlds were given to the faithful Moslem soldier. The spoils of war were his; fair castles, gardens, and conquered provinces, were the just possessions of the successful. If they fell in battle, they rose at once to their sensual rewards. Silver goblets, fastened on diamonds filled from wine-bottles never before opened, and mingled with the water that sparkles in the fountains where the cherubim drink, should slake their thirst, without danger of satiety or inebriation. Beautiful black-eyed virgins, with skin as white as polished pearls, should become their wives. Reposing on ele-

* Ockley, p. 366 : Bohn, 5th Ed.

vated beds, amid verdant fields, gardens, and fountains of exquisite beauty, and bordered by rivers that refresh and flow forever, the sufferer should find the compensations for courage and for death in the field of battle. Motives such as these, presented to a race so ardent and impulsive, kindled the wildest enthusiasm, and vast hordes rose from their solitudes and followed each other on the bloody trail of war and carnage.

Ethiopia and Arabia are alike the prolific home of the locust. They darken the air in their flight, create a rushing sound with their wings, like distant thunder, and cover a frontier, it is said, sometimes of five hundred miles. "This plague," says Pliny, "is considered a manifestation of the wrath of the gods. By their numbers they darken the sun, and the nations view them with anxious surprise. Their strength is unfailing, so that they cross oceans and pervade immense tracts of land. They cover the harvests with a dreadful cloud, their very touch destroying the fruits of the earth, and their bite utterly consuming every thing."

"The quantity," says Volney, "of these insects is incredible to all who have not themselves witnessed their astonishing numbers.

The whole earth is covered with them for the space of several leagues. The noise they make in browsing on the trees may be heard at a great distance. The Tartars themselves are less destructive than these little animals. One would imagine that fire had followed their progress. Wherever their myriads spread, the verdure of the country disappears; trees and plants stripped of their leaves give the appearance of winter to the spring. When clouds of them take their flight, the heavens are literally obscured by them."

"The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them as a desolate wilderness, yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses.* . . . Like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains; . . . like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble; as a strong people set in battle array. . . . The earth shall quake before them, the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. . . . The Lord shall utter his voice before his army. . . .

* "Its head is of the size of a pea, though longer,—its forehead pointing downward, like the handsome Andalusian horse."—*Dillon's Travels*

His camp is very great.”* Saracenic armies, issuing from the home of the locust, and like them in number and destructiveness and in many other respects, are said by the prophet, metonymically, to be those insects just rising up in their appalling migrations.

The ungrateful soil of the Arab returned him no remuneration for his labour. His camel or horse, his tent and scimitar, constituted his wealth and his resources. Always on the alert, ever armed, governed by no law but his will, his interest, or his impulses, his conscience and his understanding uninstructed, his sagacity and his emotional nature alone strongly developed, he must be ranked just where he has ever been,—with the most impressible of the human race. A verdant field, a flowing river, the shadows of trees, pendent fruit of a most delicious flavour, women of extraordinary beauty, a paradise of voluptuous ecstasies;—the ever-recurring imagery of the Koran,† were the appropriate excitements of his imaginative being, the prolific sources of fanatic courage and religious delusion.

In that hotbed of cruelty and lust over

* Joel ii.

† De Rycer's Koran, ch. lxxxiii. to ch. lxxxviii., inclusive.

which the impostor held sway, the effusions of Hara had become an incubation of intense activity, as they settled on its bosom and invited its slumbering myriads into aggressive life. Never did an army more effective, of a more destructive and irresistible fanaticism, rise at the conjurations of a wily magician, or evolve from the dark creations of a heated imagination.

A turban, unfurled and suspended for a banner from the point of Boreida's spear, when the forlorn prophet entered Medina, made the yellow head-dress ever after the distinguishing badge of his Saracenic disciples.* It became the ornament and golden crown of Moslem soldiers. Their long black tresses escaping from underneath its graceful folds, their loose and flowing robes, often ornamented with ribbons and rich silks, (the spoils of war,) gave to these conquerors of the world, when seen in the distance, the appearance of an army of women. But John's nearer view of them corrected first and false impressions: they had *the faces of men*; they were *armed for war*. "Their physical structure is in all respects more perfect than that of Europeans, their organs of

* The Turks wear white ones.

sense exquisitely acute, their size above the average of men in general, their figure robust and elegant.”*

Their neatly-fitting breastplates were worn not for ornament but for use. With eyes deep-set, overshadowed by shaggy eyebrows and supported by high cheek-bones, with mouths large, teeth prominent and carnivorous,—in a word, in their whole aspect,—the animal predominated over the man. Their look was appalling; their battle-cry, accompanying the charge of their rushing squadrons, loud and courageous; their onset irresistible. It was “as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.”

Nothing truly peculiar and strikingly characteristic of the Moslem invaders escaped the vision of John.† The compact infantry of the Romans was not before him in this panorama. These strange soldiers were mounted, and rushed on their mission of wo in the saddle. The camel, at the first in more general use among the poorer classes of the Mohammedans, soon gave place to the horse,—

* Baron De Larrey, surgeon-general of Napoleon's army in Egypt.

† Rev. ix. 7-9.

the native and the favourite of Yemen and the main dependence of Saracenic armies. Encumbered by no baggage, quartering, like the locust, on newly-appropriated districts, continued enterprises of war were undertaken at a moment's warning, and distant cities, assured of safety from their very remoteness from the scenes of late invasions and disasters, were themselves suddenly stricken and oppressed. The first intimation of danger arose usually from the actual perception of its immediate vicinity. At break of day there is perceived an unusual rush, as of winds, or commotions in the air, or as of a prolonged, undulating sound, a low tremulous thunder, in the earth. It reaches the ear of the sentinel on the walls, of the citizen in the gate, of the mother at her cradle, of the bride at her toilet. It is the hostile camp just put in motion; it is the tramp of a hundred thousand horse. Every eye is now directed toward the unprotected and invaded frontier. A long waving line skirts the horizon; it rises higher and darker, like a cloud of locusts just taking wing in myriads from the bosom of the desert. It is the dust from the feet of the Moslem cavalry

CHAPTER X.

MOHAMMED AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

“Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness.”

COWPER.

WE shall now take our leave of the false prophet, to follow those that succeeded to his bloody throne and spread his martial and his ghostly dominion. Mohammed at his death ceased from being an actor in the scenes that originated from the effusions of the pit. He sent out its smoke, put in motion those important social convulsions and changes which ended in the establishment of his faith and of his government, subverted the idolatry and independence of his native country, and then disappeared forever.

The army that had sprung up around him gave to his “dark sentences” a more comprehensive meaning, a wider range, than suited the timidity of old age or the imbecility incident to the poison he had imbibed three years before.

“After his return to Medina from his late pilgrimage,” says Prideaux, (pages 87–89,) “he began daily to decline through the force of that poison which he had taken three years before at Kaabar, which, still working in him, at length brought him so low as forced him, on the 28th day of Saphar, (the second month of the year,) to take his bed; and on the twelfth day of the following month he died, after having been sick thirteen days

“The beginning of his sickness was a slow fever, which at length made him delirious; whereon he called for a pen, ink, and paper, telling them that he would dictate a book to them which should keep them from erring after his death. . . . During his sickness he much complained of the bit* which he had taken at Kaabar, telling those that came to visit him that he had felt the torments of it in his body ever since; that at times it brought on him very dolorous pains, and that then it was going to break his very heart-strings. And when, among others, there came to see him the mother of Bashar, who died on the spot of that poison, he cried out, ‘O mother of Bashar, the veins of my heart are now breaking of the bit which

* Meat poisoned by a female.

I eat with your son at Kaabar.' Some of his followers would have had him buried at Mecca, some at Jerusalem, others at Medina. Abu Beker, coming in, told them that he had often heard from the prophet himself that prophets were to be buried in the place where they died; and then, without more ado, commanded the bed whereon he lay to be plucked out, and a grave to be immediately dug under it, to which all consented; and there they buried him forthwith, in the place where he died, which was in the chamber of Ayesha, his best-beloved wife, at Medina; and there he lieth to this day, without an iron coffin or loadstones to hang him in the air, as the stories which commonly go about of him among Christians fabulously relate."

The flame of an unholy ambition, in any event, had spent itself in the frame which it had excited and consumed. He had become weary of long marches and sieges, of exposures and privations. The prospects of distant and dangerous campaigns filled the prematurely old and infirm pretender with pacific intentions. His councils were now shaped to repress the ardour of his followers. But the locust horde had already taken wing,—had inherited a destructive nature with all the energy

of its young and ungratified propensities; and scarcely had his body sunk to its last resting-place in the earth, underneath the bedchamber of Ayesha, in Medina, A.D. 632,* when the bloody drama which his inventive genius had prepared was opened in Asia by his fierce lieutenants. The world, through other leaders, felt the shock of his now palsied arm.

“The evil that men do lives after them.” Mohammed, like his famed progenitor, had left a sad legacy to the world. Both stand out by themselves in a solitary and gloomy grandeur of nature, with the awful capabilities of impressing their ruinous individualities on the men of their own times and of making their own deep footprints the highway of after-generations.

The caliphs gave perpetuity to a creed which they embraced with sincere and fanatic zeal, snatched from the failing grasp of their dying prophet the whip of scorpions, and became in their turn the propagandists of his

* Mohammed was evidently delirious at his death. His call for materials to write a new book just before he breathed his last is in evidence of this; and his last words, “O God, pardon my sins! yes, I come among my fellow-citizens on high!” should not be put down as evidence of his sincerity, but of mental aberration.

imposture and the scourge of the world. In the first great battle of the Moslems with a foreign foe at Muta, "Zeid fell like a soldier in the foremost ranks. The death of Jaafar was heroic and memorable. He lost his right hand; he shifted the standard to his left. The left was severed from his body; he embraced the standard with his bleeding stumps till he was transfixed to the ground with fifty honourable wounds. 'Advance!' cried Abdallah, who stepped into the vacant place; 'either victory or paradise is our own!' The lance of a Roman decided the alternative; but the falling standard was rescued by Caled, the proselyte of Mecca; nine swords were broken in his hands, and his valour withstood and repulsed the superior number of the Christians.

"Caled is renowned among his brethren and his enemies by the glorious appellation of the *sword of God*."* His shout was louder than that of Mohammed, his agility and his strength that of the tiger,† his cruelty as un-

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 141.

† "While he was fighting with one of the Greeks, his sword broke in his hand; but, closing with his adversary, he squeezed him so hard that he broke his ribs and then threw him down dead from off his horse."—*Ockley*, p. 193.

relenting. Over his head waved the standard of the black eagle; and his battle-cry, as he rushed to his banquet of blood, sent a thrill of terror to the hearts of the brave.

When he led his troops into Damascus, his ears were deaf to the supplications of the conquered. The bitter wail that rose around him was drowned by his voice. It thundered along the crowded street, lined with murderers:—"No quarters to the unbelievers! no quarters!" Obeidah had entered the town at another point and had granted the prayer of the trembling Damascenes; midway met the rival chiefs and the tides of war and peace. The enraged Caled claimed that Obeidah's grant was invalid and an invasion of privilege. "The unbelievers," shouted the gaunt murderer, "shall perish by the sword! Fall on!"*

When Caled became a proselyte, he was commissioned by Mohammed to destroy the remaining idols of Arabia. His cruelty to the Jodhamites shocked even the remorseless prophet himself. For, after many were taken prisoners, he tied the hands of numbers behind their backs and put them all to the sword.†

Before his death he was charged with em-

* Mil. Gib. ch. 51.

† Ockley, p. 55.

bezzlement. "An examination was accordingly instituted, with every indignity, and his turban fastened round his neck in the ignominious grasp of the common crier. . . . The imposition of a fine satisfied the public justice ; but when his horse, his armour, and one slave, were found to constitute all his wealth, Omar deigned to weep over the tomb, at Emesa, of the injured conqueror of Syria."* Such were the fierce whelps that howled for the prey as soon as their leashes were dropped by the departed Mohammed. Mischief was afoot, and its inevitable march was down the waste of years.

* Major Pierce, in note to Ockley, p. 255

CHAPTER XI.

THE SARACENS, A SCOURGE TO CHRISTENDOM.

“Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.”—REV. ix. 5.

THE locust, though destructive to vegetation, is not malignant in its disposition or poisonous in its bite or sting. It became necessary, therefore, as inspiration would represent the true character of the woe, to introduce into the description of it another insect or reptile common to the torrid zone, and of extraordinary and deadly irascibility. Said the prophet, “And they had tails like unto scorpions, and they had stings in their tails. Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.”

The sting of a scorpion is a sharp-pointed downward curve at the end of his tail; and, when excited, he raises it and inflicts a deadly wound. The stroke is sudden and without warning. The poison—a cold, colourless fluid—oozes out with either the exertion or pres-

sure attending the stroke, or both combined, and is left in the incision made. It is very diffusive. It is taken up at once into the circulation, and assimilates in a very short time the whole mass of the fluids, the wound itself remaining but slightly inflamed.

Such was the venom of that spiritual poison in the creed of the false prophet. It was left behind in every conquered country, to assimilate every thing to its own nature. Its stealthy approach was unobserved, like that of the scorpion in the footpath, until *it*, or the resistless stroke of the scimitar, or a life of bondage, became the alternatives to be at once chosen, and that without debate. Many chose death; and torrents of Christian blood were rained upon the pavements of fallen cities. Many chose to pay tribute, and to drag out a sickly being under heavy exactions and most destructive religious prohibitions. Others chose at once to imbibe the poison and to purchase social and political equality among their conquerors by an open and shameless apostasy.

Said Romanus, the fallen governor of Bozrah, "I renounce your society, both in this world and in the world to come; and I deny Him that was crucified and whosoever worships him; and I choose God for my Lord,

Islam for my faith, Mecca for my temple, the Moslem for my brethren, and Mohammed for my prophet, who was sent to lead men into the right way and to exalt the true religion in spite of all those who join partners with God.”*

A venerable Greek, issuing on one occasion from an army of seventy thousand Christians, offered presents and terms of peace to the invader of Syria; but Caled's reply was, “Ye Christian dogs! ye know your option. The Koran, the tribute, or the sword.”†

When the Moslems sat down before the gates of a besieged Christian city, the summons to surrender ran usually in the following terms:—“We require you to testify that there is but one God, and that Mohammed is the prophet of God.”

“In the name of the most merciful God. From Abu Obeidah Ebn Aljirahh to the chief commanders of the people of Æliah‡ and the inhabitants thereof. Health and happiness to every one that follows the right way and believes in God and the apostle. We require of you to testify that there is but one God, and Mohammed is his apostle, and that there shall

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 192.

† Ibid. p. 195.

‡ Jerusalem.

be a day of judgment when God shall raise the dead out of their sepulchres; and when you have borne witness to this, it is unlawful for us either to shed your blood or meddle with your substance or children. If you refuse this, consent to pay tribute and be under us forthwith; otherwise I shall bring men against you who love death better than you do the drinking of wine or eating of hogs' flesh; nor will I ever stir from you, if it please God, till I have destroyed those that fight for you and made slaves of your children."*

Those who consented to these terms imbibed the poison of a false faith in its deadliest form. That was a scorpion-sting indeed, which penetrated to the very soul, corrupted the blood of an immortal nature, and brought on the endless horrors of the second death. He who embraced that creed perished; for he sinned against the remedy itself: and what sin could be more mortal? For, though he exalted God in his unity, he in the next breath degraded him in his Son. This was the sting in the tail,—the venom of the scorpion left behind; and this was *it* that was ever demanded, while the scimitar, dripping with gore,

* Ockley, p. 206

waved over the head of the fallen disciple. *It* was the deadliest sting in the Saracenic woe.

The stroke of the scorpion, though generally, was not uniformly, fatal; perhaps because its most concentrated venom failed to be always ejected into the wound. Those that survived, however, lost their vigour and vivacity, and sank to an early grave from the effects of the poison,—a true and sad picture of an expiring Christianity consuming away under Mohammedan exactions, prohibitions, and influences. The masses of those who purchased life and toleration by paying tribute were gradually either absorbed and lost to the church in an amalgamation with the social and religious habits of their conquerors, or were led in despair to emigrate to distant lands. The vast regions that stretch from India across Asia and Africa to the Atlantic, and a part of Europe, became Mohammedan countries. Over all these fair Christian provinces the scorpion made his disgusting trail and left everywhere his deadly venom. Those who were not at once destroyed were doomed to experience a torment, to fall into a despondency and a despair, like to that which the scorpion diffuses through life's wasting fountains "when it striketh a man."

It is of all reptiles the most irascible and destructive. Shut up under a glass with the mouse, the spider,—yea, with even its own kind,—it will at once commence a deadly feud with all, and will fight till it destroy or be destroyed. A female, it is related, killed all its offspring successively but one. That one, more vigorous than the rest, sprung upon the back of its unnatural mother and stung her to death. It is said that, when highly exasperated, the undaunted suicide will kill itself with the stroke of its own tail.

Such traits are remarkably illustrative of the irascible and destructive dispositions of the descendants of Ishmael as they appeared prior to the advent of Mohammed among them. They have since then been put under a religious discipline which restrains their tendency to kill one another. Their animosities are no longer optional and impulsive, but organized and obligatory. The Koran pours its venom round the Moslem's heart, and makes its outworkings toward all others but the ordinary evidences of his religious sincerity. It requires that no debate be had with unbelievers; that all gain-saying should be ended at once by the thrust of the spear or the sword.

“Pray,” said Omar, “mind what I say to

you: if any man makes profession of our religion, and then leaves it, we kill him.”*

Omar, in the course of an address, quoted this passage from the Koran:—“He whom God shall direct is led in the right way; but thou shalt not find a friend to direct him aright whom God shall lead into error.” A Christian priest that sat before him stood up and said, “God leads no man into error,” and repeated it. Omar said nothing to him, but bade those that stood by strike off his head if he should say so again.†

While success attended the arms of the Saracens, they seem to have laid aside altogether their former domestic retaliations. Disappointment and defeat, however, rouses the latent fury of their nature still, and even the precepts of the Koran prove at such conjunctures an insufficient restraint. The finest army they ever marshalled, when partially defeated by Charles Martel, became enraged at the severe handling they were receiving from the heavy blows of the Normans, and, without any other assignable reason, cut each other in pieces.

* Ockley, p. 209.

† Ockley, pp. 210–11.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SARACENS, A SCOURGE TO CHRISTENDOM.— CONTINUED.

“And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”—REV. ix. 6.

It is simply fanciful to interpret this of the fanatic Derar, and perhaps a very few others of the Moslems, who sought or seemed to court death for the purpose of joining at an earlier hour their black-eyed wives in paradise; since it is the intention of the Evangelist, obviously, to describe the woe as it was seen to affect those on whom it fell.

“Oppression maketh a wise man mad;” but there are forms of it that tempt even to suicide. Among men of conscience and of courage, though at the same time destitute of true piety, the alternative of death was often sought in posts of danger and in fields of battle to avoid a constrained apostasy, a base submission, or the sight of domestic violation and dishonour. And even here,

amid falling and flying thousands, though covered with many wounds, death fled their eager embrace. And, as their religious principles would not allow them to inflict a voluntary death-stroke with their own hands upon themselves, they envied their more fortunate brethren-in-arms who had sought and who had obtained the gift to die.

Sad indeed it was to hear the jackal growl and the raven croak in the fields of the slain; but sadder far to hear the Moslem shout as he bore away a wife or a daughter to his harem; to endure his look of scorn for holy things and holy ties; to see his strong hand bear aloft the standard of the black eagle, plant it on Christian battlements, and unfold and wave it in triumph over the broken crucifixes and trampled images of Jesus. Oh, the living madness of this form of the woe! It was heaven's whip of scorpions, to torment before the time, in the visible church, those that repented not of their thefts, idolatries, and persecutions.

How terrible was the doom of Babylon, and how signal as to the time and manner of its infliction! In the sumptuous halls of its palace were gathered the impious revellers. The vessels of Jehovah's temple were brought forth, drink-offerings poured out; and all united in

praising the idols of silver and of gold. Suddenly above their heads appeared the handwriting on the wall; and, while princes and courtiers were seeking to define their terror and restore their courage, the battle-cry of Cyrus is heard:—"Awake, ye princes, and anoint the shield!" His soldiers rush through the opened gates, and the blood of the revellers is mingled with their sacrifices. Said the prophet, "It is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple."

The Christian church, the vast visible temple of the Holy Ghost, was now again likewise profaned in the East and in the West, and God again went through it, armed with a whip of scorpions twisted long before and prepared to his hand, driving out thence the vile priest reeking with lust, blood, and simony, overturning the tables of the money-changers and trampling images and crucifixes underneath his burning feet. The Saracenic woe, destructive though it was, had a divine commission: "it was the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple."

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

CHAPTER XIII.

MOHAMMED PROTECTING THE TRUE CHURCH : THE NESTORIANS.

“They lived unknown
Till persecution dragged them into fame
And chased them up to heaven.”

COWPER; *Task*, p. 763.

THE locusts were commanded to subsist on that which they were never known to select for food. How like the Arab (the bosom of whose deserts had from time immemorial been covered with idols) violating the cherished instincts of ages in making war upon the world's idolatry!

The locusts were also commanded not to hurt that which they were never known to spare. “It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads.” Ishmael's animosities to true religion, ever natural and ever injurious both before the rise and after the fall of the empire

of the caliphs, were, during its continuance, required to be put under most effectual restraint.

The Saracens were not to make war in any event upon the sealed. Wherever else the blight of their shadow might fall or the stroke of their vengeance smite, the living verdure must remain unharmed on the slopes of Zion, the olive flourish unmolested in the courts of the Lord, and no axe be raised to fell the evergreens that waved over Lebanon.

The exception is comprehensive and discriminative. It includes each organized fraternity of true believers. These were as conspicuous for their purifying and persevering testimony as were the image-worshippers for their impiety, whose degenerate Christianity they rejected and whose oppressions they bore. *IT* was the seal that heaven had placed on their open and manly brow. To point them out, to vindicate their injured fame, and to trace their progress and preservation under this most singular protectorate, will be made the agreeable toil of a passing hour.

The worship of the Virgin Mary is not only deeply rooted in the Greek and Latin sects, but it was the earliest form and evidence of their apostasy. By the true church Mary has ever

been regarded as a subject of the fall, a sinner saved by grace, the mother of our Lord's humanity, as probably the mother of other children,* and not properly as the mother of God or the proper object of religious veneration.

In A.D. 428, the presbyter Anastasius publicly and earnestly condemned the title *θεοτοκος*, "mother of God," given to Mary. *Χριστοκος*, "mother of Christ," he insisted, was far more expressive of the truth on this point both in divinity and philosophy. Deity could not be born, and humanity alone could derive its being from a human parent. Nestorius defended these views; and the controversy thus originated in Constantinople spread throughout the church. Numbers of the pious and the learned in Asia and Africa held and defended the same Scriptural views.

Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, procured the calling of a council at Ephesus, A.D. 431, in which he presided, and, without waiting for the arrival of the Eastern bishops, or even the decencies of apparent justice, deprived Nestorius of his episcopate and banished him into a solitary place in the deserts of Egypt. Here he died, A.D. 435. Thus commenced the contro-

* Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7.

versy and the persecution. But the Nestorians, with unbroken resolution, upheld the primitive faith, refused all divine honours to the Virgin, and were numerous and powerful throughout the East.

Proscribed and persecuted by the Greeks and Latins, they penetrated the interior of Arabia, Transoxiana, and even China. Their sufferings inflamed their zeal and awakened the pity of savage breasts.

The celebrated "Testament of Mohammed" is among the earliest productions of the Arabian prophet, and originated, it is believed, in his sympathy for them. If not written by his own hand, it is all the same to us in the premises, since in the solemn convictions of the Saracens it was so written, did contain his signature and seal, and its provisions were consequently sacredly heeded and carried out by them.

This extraordinary document secured to the Nestorians freedom from service in war, perfect toleration of their customs and laws, exemption of their clergy from tribute, imposed a moderate tax on their people; and even their poor serving-maids employed in Mohammedan families were to be permitted to observe all the ceremonies or fasts enjoined by their church,

and to have no restraint whatever put upon their Christian liberty.

“As to this testament,” says Maclane, “whether it be genuine or spurious, it is certain that its contents were true, since many learned men have fully proved that the pseudo-prophet, at his first setting out, prohibited in the strongest manner the commission of all sorts of injuries against the Christians, and especially the Nestorians.”* The fall of Persia and of Asia into the hands of the Saracens procured therefore, for these persecuted disciples, privileges which they did not previously possess, and which they chronicle with pious gratitude.

“Even the Arabs,” writes Jesujabus, their patriarch, “on whom the Almighty has in these days bestowed the dominion of the earth, are among us, as thou knowest; yet they do not persecute the Christian religion, but, on the contrary, they commend our faith and commend the priests and saints of the Lord, conferring benefits on his churches and convents.”†

When the vicar of Mohammed had collected troops for the invasion of Syria, his language in his instructions to his lieutenants and army is in conformity with the provisions of this

* Maclane's note in Mosheim, vol. i. p. 183

† Assemani, vol. iii. p. 131.

testament. . . . "Destroy no palm-trees nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit-trees nor do any mischief to cattle. . . . As you go on you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries and propose to themselves to serve God in that way. Let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. And you will find another sort of people, that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute."*

Even as late as the seventh century the monasteries were occupied by laymen. They wore their hair long; but when they became priests they shaved the hair from the top of their heads.

The words used by the apostle and by the caliph are strikingly similar. It is as though, through the vista of years, and in the bosom of the desert, John had seen Abubeker ascend a hill, review his troops, and had heard and did but recite his very words, when he said, "It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 188.

men that had not the seal of God in their foreheads." It is as though he intended to select at least just so much of that remarkable charge to the Moslem army as should serve to identify it with the very woe to which he referred, as protective with respect to the sealed, and as containing heaven's cup of trembling to image-worshippers.

"When Heraclius, the emperor, expressed his astonishment at this extraordinary success of the Arabs, who were inferior to the Greeks both in number, strength, arms, and discipline, after a short silence, a grave man stood up and told him that the reason of it was that the Greeks had walked unworthily of their Christian profession, and changed their religion from what it was when Jesus Christ first delivered it to them, injuring and oppressing one another, taking usury, committing fornication, and fomenting all manner of strife and variance among themselves. And, indeed, the vices of these Christians were at that time so flagrant as to make them offensive to the very infidels, as confessed by the Greek writers themselves and exaggerated by the Arabic ones. The emperor answered, 'That he was too sensible of it.'"*

* Ockley, pp. 194, 196.
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All the countries over which the Cæsars bore sway, with but limited exceptions, had in the seventh century joined the general defection from Christ, and were regarded by the invaders as doomed to the sword, as Canaan had previously been to that of Joshua. The idols of a fallen paganism had revived everywhere, as by enchantment, and, adorned with holy garments and gilded crosses and named after Jesus, Mary, the apostles and martyrs, were set up and worshipped in all the sanctuaries of Christendom. Men with bare feet and shaven crowns conducted the idolatrous services of the people, and often bore the idols on the walls of besieged towns and along the lines of Christian armies, to inspire devotion and courage. Even in the recesses of the desert they were known as the priesthood of an apostate church, and are hence specifically designated by the indignant caliph as not the limit, but the butt, of the woe.

The exception in favour of the refugees of the monasteries originated, doubtless, in the deep veneration felt for the testament of the Arabian prophet. When the battle raged around the monastery of the holy fathers, about thirty miles from Damascus, the monastery was spared; and the priest, though he treated with scorn the

bloody Caled, was not slain. Said the chief, curbing his rage,*—"if the apostle of God, of blessed memory, had not commanded us to let such men as you alone, you should not have escaped any more than the rest, but I would have put you to a most cruel death."

"The successors of Mohammed in Persia employed the Nestorians in the most important affairs both of the cabinet and of the provinces, and suffered the patriarch of that sect alone to reside in the kingdom of Bagdad."† Under the caliphs, the Nestorians continued to flourish. From Persia to China their metropolitan sees dotted the whole interior of Eastern Asia. But when the Turks arose and introduced the second woe, they were brought under another sort of men, to whom it had not been said, "Hurt not the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads." It is not the divine purpose always to preserve his people from persecution: their preservation, on the contrary, is an exception at any time to a general rule, a rule thus expressed:—"He that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Their

* Ockley, p. 168.

† Assemani, p. 97.

preservation therefore under the caliphs, made prominent in prophecy and in history, gains thus the distinctness of a great event; is pointed out as "the white spot in the hide of the black camel," the oasis that for four centuries continued to smile amid Mohammedan desolations; and is beheld in the retrospections of our own times as beautiful and memorable.

The Nestorians, it is quite evident also, had, at the period of the Turkish conquests in Asia, fallen from their first love; and their candlestick, like that of the seven churches, could not in that event have retained its place. It is quite probable also that Providence, in numerous elective processes, had already drawn the piety of declining Nestorianism into the higher purity of the Paulicians, and had effected its ultimate exodus through the Alps.

With the decline of the caliphs the emigration of the godly evidently set toward the West. The connecting link between the East and the West was formed by the Paulicians. Their churches were spread out on the western confines of Nestorianism, and fringed with light the eastern borders of the Greek empire. It will break the chain in our illustrations to omit a brief notice of this sect.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOHAMMED PROTECTING THE TRUE CHURCH : THE PAULICIANS.

“The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.”

A DEACON returning from captivity in Syria, A.D. 660, tarried for a night near Samosata with a man named Constantine. With him he left a copy of the New Testament. It to him became an invaluable treasure, the study and the rule of his life; his house and his heart the place of its sanctifying influence. The Paulicians, thus incidentally originated, suffered for one hundred and fifty years all the rigours of a most violent persecution.

During all this period their patience failed not. Under the decree of the cruel empress Theodora, to say nothing of other persecutions, the army of their martyrs was numbered, by their foes, at a hundred thousand. The bleeding remnant, just at the point of total extermination, fled for protection to the Moham-medans. Here they found pity and shelter,

liberty to build a city, and perfect religious toleration. And here also, in after-years, sprang up that alliance which enabled their exasperated and valiant sons to win back again for a season their country and to maké inquest for the blood of their injured and unresisting sires.

Unable to ruin them, on account of their Saracenic resources, their transportation into the different countries of Europe became the settled policy of the emperors. Separated from their Asiatic friends, their conversion might perhaps be possible; or their burial in the silence of the grave the easier and the more certain alternative. "Under the Byzantine standards the Paulicians were often transported to the Greek provinces of Italy and Sicily. . . . Their opinions were silently propagated in Rome and in the kingdoms beyond the Alps. . . . It was in the country of the Albigois, in the southern provinces of France, that the Paulicians were most deeply implanted. . . . In the thirteenth century, the visible assemblies of the Paulicians were extirpated by fire and sword. . . . A confession of simple worship and blameless manners is extorted from their enemies."*

* Gibbon, vol. v. pp. 397, 398.

Previously to his conversion the father of the Paulicians was probably a Manichæan. This would lay a sufficient foundation for the most injurious imputations,—for charging upon him and his followers the worst forms of the repudiated error. The Manichæans would also often be confounded with his followers by the persecutors, who would care but little by what name their victims were designated, so that it was at the same time sufficiently odious. One or two instances of this kind, taken up and artfully managed two hundred years afterward, might easily be made to pass, among hasty compilers, for “the voice of all antiquity.”

Obloquy is Rome’s best atonement for her murders,—the uniform sequel to every massacre, the vile reservoir in which her dripping skirts have ever been washed from innocent blood. It is indeed difficult to defend those whose tongues and whose manuscripts have alike been dissolved and scattered in the ashes of the stake; but, “as they cannot plead for themselves, our candid criticism will magnify the good and abate or suspect the evil that is reported by their adversaries.”*

They were very tenacious of denominational

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 385.

life, and maintained it until the tenth century, against the oppressions of force and the seductions of flattery. Both were employed to exterminate or convert them; and both, during four centuries, though aided by the assiduities of an empire, proved unavailing. At the end of this period, having been transported, they became absorbed among the churches of the Alps. This easy transition is traceable to the identity of their views and sympathies with the Albigenses. The same people, deriving their origin from the same Word and Spirit, meet in this instance, and, "like kindred drops, mingle into one." Luther startled Europe when he endorsed and vindicated the injured Huss. It was a testimony, however, demanded at the time, and both generous and just. His own wronged motives and character have stood all the brighter for it. The Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Nestorians, the Paulicians, are now also being reached, and are beginning to be rescued from obloquy and oblivion with their later brethren.

The churches of the valleys, with which the Paulicians became identified, were planted by Paul, as current tradition affirms,—a fact, indeed, often admitted in substance by the Inquisitors themselves. Never connected with

the church of Rome, and uniformly protesting alike against its errors and those also of the Gnostics and Manichæans, fraternization with them is of itself a sufficient vindication of the Paulicians from the scandals of Rome.

In and after the tenth century—the period in which they become so favourably known to us—the stream becomes too modern, broad, and majestic, to be effectually clouded and soiled by Papal hands. Pure and noble, say we, must have been the fountains that, in a remote antiquity and in desert places, began to send out such healing and refreshing waters. Providence is opening a brighter era for the memory of the injured martyrs. The voices of the present are mingled already with those of past ages in most gratifying harmony. Extreme intervals of time and space are becoming annihilated. The deep beds of seas and rivers are giving up their secrets, and fountains their chronicles. The vaults of unexplored grottos and the halls of buried cities are yet, it is also believed, to break the painful silence of centuries, and to make still more illustrious the unity of Zion's testimony and the purity and patience of the saints. But, in any event, it is quite certain, even now, that the Saracens, when they extended over the Paulicians their

effective protectorate, were but aiding the same church in Asia on which heaven has so signally affixed its seal in Europe and America, and which it was commanded them that they should not hurt.

Thus the witnesses did not break, but continued, their succession. The disappearance of the Paulicians from Asia was not their extirpation, but their exodus. The candlestick was not destroyed; it was removed from the Euphrates to the Rhone. The star that set in the mountains of Armenia rose to adorn the glaciers of the Alps. Out of the East, now finally become the field of blood and the charnel-house of nations, God had but called his Bride to hide her in her long-prepared citadel of rocks in the West. It was her next retreat, prior to her last, across the Atlantic. Ishmael's wild and bloody defence was now at length to be exchanged for the safer defiles of inaccessible mountains.

The distinct recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of Jesus as God's eternal Son, possessed of equal power and glory with the Father, on the part of the Nestorians and the Paulicians, exposed them equally with all others to the sword of the Saracens; since all such are indiscriminately denounced in the Koran, and

alike condemned to death, to tribute, or the flames. The preservation of these Christians, therefore, was an event not only not to have been anticipated, but, even now that we have all the facts before us, is to be accounted for with the greatest difficulty, and even to be rejected as a fable, were it not attested by the unbroken voice of antiquity.

The Pagans and Jews, the Latins and Greeks, experienced the rigour of Mohammedan rule when under it, and, when not, the torment of perpetual aggressions. But these Christians, though holding the dogma most offensive to the pseudo-prophet, and to falsify and overthrow which he makes war upon the world, do not so much as lose their citizenship. Yea, even while their very controversies make it all the more obvious that they exalt Jesus to a divine Sonship, and worship him as the equal and the companion of the Father, they are carefully protected and their wrongs avenged on their adversaries by those who are by their principles and prejudices arrayed against them. "What shall we then say to these things," but that it was commanded them so to do by Mohammed, because he could not curse, as Balaam could not, whom God had not cursed?—that the command was

repeated by the caliphs in every subsequent age of their rule, because God had ordained that “the people should dwell alone, and should not be reckoned among the nations”? The utterances of prophecy are laws of providence, that, amid all possible and conflicting contingencies, cannot be broken. The flood—the tendency of which is the whole world’s destruction—bears up and saves the ark.

CHAPTER XV.

MOHAMMED PROTECTING THE TRUE CHURCH : THE PHILADELPHIANS.

“He shall not . . . shoot an arrow there.”

AMONG the seven churches of Asia, Philadelphia alone received the distinct promise of being kept from the hour of temptation that should come upon all the world to try them that dwelt upon the earth. (Rev. x. 3.) Persecutions by pagan emperors could not have been intended, it is thought, since these had already commenced. John's banishment to Patmos belonged to such forms of oppression; and he could not then in that conjuncture have respected them as new, peculiar, and as yet to come, or as yet to startle the church by a sudden invasion and to seduce and destroy her children.

The gradual growth of error, as tares spring up imperceptibly and slowly among the wheat, seems not either to suit the action of the temptation which is to come upon the church from

causes external to herself, or to be sprung upon it suddenly, as a snare upon the unsuspecting bird. The great apostasy of the Greeks and Latins did not come *upon* the church; it grew up *in* it. It was not a sudden expansion of a snare, but the gradual development of the smallest beginnings of evil. That apostasy continues still. It has not yet completed the whole circuit of its prophetic hour; and from it Philadelphia has not been preserved, as it must have been if that snare had been intended. She has fallen into the idolatry and superstition of the Greek church quite as deeply as any of her sister churches.

No universal temptation suddenly brought upon the whole world from a source wholly external to its existing institutions, that began to be, in a period subsequent to the banishment of John, answers to the language of the text like that of the rise and spread of the Mohammedan delusion. It arose from a source wholly external to all other religions. It came suddenly, like a snare, upon the whole world. In six years after the first invasion of Syria by the Saracens the whole of that vast and populous country was in their power. Even Asia Minor was reached, and Laodicea succumbed to the false prophet. The subsequent subjugation

of Egypt, Persia, Bokhara, and Africa, seemed but the brief work of a day. As nothing can stop the progress of the locust but Heaven's own tempest driving them back into the sea, so nothing could stop the progress of the Saracens but a Divine interposition. They were, even at the point of defeat, quite irresistible.

There was in the new faith also a *snare*, a speciousness, a show of piety and of religious zeal or sincerity, that made *it* and its professors compare very favourably with the religion and the disciples of a degenerate Christendom. And, when social equality with the new lords of the civilized world, it was found, could be at once purchased by embracing Islamism, thousands chose this alternative and renounced Christianity. It is not, therefore, without strong reasons that this passage has been supposed to relate to this temptation.

The spiritual or internal history of the church of Philadelphia, since A.D. 96, lies shrouded in deep obscurity. It was and still is connected with the Greek church. Its distance from the sea, its neglect by the emperors, (noticed by Gibbon,) must have been favourable to its retention of primitive simplicity and purity. Both commerce and imperial influence would, in the fifth century, have proved ad-

verse to its fidelity to Christ in a very high degree. In its seclusion it may have retained for a season its integrity.

And equally adverse would have been the capture of the city by the Saracens. The testament of Mohammed granted to the Nestorians would not have sheltered the Christians of Philadelphia, since they belonged to the communion of the Greek church, against which the Mohammedans regarded themselves as having had committed to them a mission of special severity. If, in the event of their subjugation, the same terms had been presented to the Philadelphians which had been before to other communities, the church must have lost its Christianity by acceding to them, or have been put to the sword if they refused. The protection of the city from the Saracenic invaders involves in it, therefore, the protection of the church which it contained, from the temptation. The temptation spread its snare over the conquered, and over those only. To them were its awful alternatives invariably submitted.

The promise likewise *to keep* the church of Philadelphia “from the hour of temptation” was based upon its previous fidelity to Christ, — a past and finished virtue. This it was

that secured the reward. Whatever might have been the possible character of the church in after-years or during the period designated in the benediction, it could not have affected the specific result. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, therefore will I keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come,"—*i. e.* thy past fidelity shall secure the future blessing. The preservation of the city, therefore, from the Saracens during the continuance of the prophetic hour—*viz. :* during the whole period of the reign of the caliphs—would be, as a well-ascertained historic fact, a remarkable fulfilment of the promise, even though we might suspect, at the same time, that the church had perhaps made herself quite unworthy of the divine favour, or had lost her spiritual life long before the first woe,* from which she was to have been kept, according to the promise, had passed away.

Philadelphia was captured by the Turks in A.D. 1391, 630 years after the first woe had become merged and lost in the second.† Its name was changed to that of "Allah Shihr,"—"city of God," or "high town." In 1824 it con-

* The Empire of the Caliphs. † The Ottoman Empire.

tained three thousand houses. Two hundred and fifty of these belonged to Christians of the Greek sect,—*i. e.* to nominal Christians. These point out the church in which the believers were accustomed to assemble who were addressed in the epistle of him that had “the key of David.” It is now a mosque, in which God is denied to have a Holy Spirit or a Son. Another, once dedicated to St. John, is turned into a dunghill to receive the offals of dead beasts. Five other old ruins are occupied as places of worship. Twenty other spots, the sites of once flourishing churches, are covered with their abandoned walls, on whose crumbling stones are found the pictures of saints badly painted or partially defaced. The palace of the bishop (such it is sometimes called) is but a cottage of clay. The Turkish conquest has made Philadelphia a comparative solitude. Christianity has left nothing behind her here but the faintest traces of her departed feet, or the moonlit shadows of her receding form stealing through old ruins or idolatrous ceremonies and sleeping on the pale faces of the dead. Among the seven cities of Asia, Philadelphia was the last to capitulate; and the articles agreed to, secured to her the free exercise of her religion; but still the Turks have

sadly disregarded their covenants in this respect.

“Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect,—a column in a scene of ruin, a pleasing example that the paths of honour and of safety may sometimes be the same.”* This is a beautiful picture; and, from the frequency with which it is referred to, it seems to have been forgotten that it is but a picture. Philadelphia is certainly not more prosperous than its sister cities,—is not “a column erect” in a scene of ruin. It does not stand out in striking contrast with every other creation of genius or of industry in Ionia or Lydia. It is itself a ruin, lifting up its bare and desolate head to mourn over its own and over surrounding ruins. A few pillars, bearing their shafts aloft, may remind the traveller of the promise,—“I will make him a pillar;” but they can have no real or intelligible connection with the prophecy. The name “city of God” has appeared to some very suggestive, because it was written in the prophecy, “I will write upon him the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem.” But, unfortunately, “New

* Gibbon vol. vi. p. 229.

Jerusalem" is not the name of Philadelphia. A few Greeks living in Philadelphia, calling themselves Christians,—a circumstance common in many other Turkish towns;—a few massive pillars not yet prostrate by earthquakes;—the name "city of God;"—and the rhetoric of Gibbon respecting the seven churches of Asia, and quoted above,—constitute the staple of those materials from which are wrought out, I regret to say, a supposed fulfilment of this prophecy:—"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." And yet Philadelphia is even more desolate and less Christian than some other of the seven noted cities named in the Patmos epistles. Smyrna, in particular, has a population of 130,000:—20,000 Greeks, 8000 Armenians, 1000 Europeans, 9000 Jews,—a population in the aggregate of 38,000 who are not Moslems, of whom 29,000 are nominally Christian. Philadelphia, with but 250 Greek families, and with only 3000 houses in all, makes but a sorry appearance in the contrast.

It would seem, therefore, most reasonable to conclude that the promise to Philadelphia has already long ago had its complete fulfilment, and that under the first woe. The command given not to hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any

tree, but only those men that have not the seal of God in their foreheads,* may then in this view of the subject connect itself naturally enough with the promise to the church of Philadelphia that she should be kept from that hour of temptation;† and both find their sufficient and satisfactory illustration in the finished revolution of the same prophetic period, or in the single empire of the caliphs. The Turks, in the second woe, overthrowing Greece, were placed under no such restrictions as were the Saracens. They were sent out to kill; and they have ever been distinguishable from the Saracens in this respect more than in any other. They have never discriminated between the sealed and those who were not. The first woe, therefore, must cover the epoch designated, and that only. It was a world-wide snare; had its origin, progress, and end, all within itself; and of *it* it is said, "The first woe is passed." It was restricted in its ravages. It was made to respect the interests of the sealed.

While, therefore, the first and the second woes are connected, we should not forget that they are, nevertheless, distinct from each

* Rev. ix. 4.

† Rev. iii. 10.

other both in prophecy and in history. The second originates in the first, revives while it tramples it, and gives to it an aggravated form; but this intimate union of the two woes does not confound them with each other. They are still to be kept distinct in our conceptions of them, as they are in the word of God. And in that event the whole obscurity will vanish, and the promise to the church of Philadelphia, that “she should be kept from the hour of temptation,” and the command to the Saracens “not to hurt the sealed,” coincide as prophecies relating to the same prophetic period, and find their mutual illustrations in the facts of history and during the reign of the caliphs:—a fulfilment this of the word of God most complete in itself, extending through a vast cycle of years and events, which are already fully consummated; a fulfilment that needs not to beg for illustrations at the lying ruins of an old Turkish town, or garble for sustentation at the rhetoric of an infidel.*

When the conquests of the caliphs had swept up to the confines of Asia Minor and they were commencing to destroy its churches,

* Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 229, (Boston edition.)

a pestilence arrested their farther progress in that direction. The angel of death guarded the passes to the favoured city. Horses, cattle, 25,000 soldiers, and their ablest officers, perished without hand. The tents of Syria were in affliction; the curtains of the land of Ishmael trembled. That year, called by them "the year of destruction,"* put back their sword into its sheath, and turned their camp into a hospital.

Two hundred years after this, Asia Minor is again invaded, Ephesus taken, and its lofty cathedral turned into a stable for mules and horses; and perhaps it was from the influence of the Paulicians over their Saracenic allies that the battle was made to turn at this time also from Philadelphia.†

Their rising empire spread in every direction around the city, around the confines of Lydia and Ionia, and left everywhere the deep and bloody traces of its barbarism and the deadly venom of its faith. But, under the protecting care and love of Him who guarded her walls, Philadelphia still stood secure. Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, Persia, Bokhara, Samarcand,

* Ockley's *Saracens*, p. 255, (Bohn's edition.)

† Gibbon, vol. v. p. 393.

became conquered provinces; the victorious Moslems had reached alike the confines of China and the waves of the Atlantic; the Tiber had been entered, the Ægean Sea had been crossed, Rome and Constantinople shaken; forty thousand churches, cities, and castles, had been subverted, had opened their gates, had lost their defences, had descended, altar, crucifix, and battlement, to the dust; but Philadelphia still survived,—surveyed in security, from her heaven-sealed palaces, the wild uproar of war, the ruin of surrounding churches and provinces, the tears and the wreck of nations: yea, saw in peace the close of the prophetic “hour” itself,—the end of the woe, as it sank and disappeared in the sepulchre of the last of the caliphs.

How she stood, while every town and fenced wall and strong nationality in Asia and in Africa went down under the rush of the Moslem host, remains sealed up among the mysteries not yet unfolded. The barriers of stone and the “courage”* of her sons cannot be assigned as the causes of safety; since the

* Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 229. If, instead of by the Turks, it had been captured by the Saracens, this sneer at the “prophecy” would have worn a graver aspect.

Saracens never appeared before Philadelphia at all, “to cast a bank against it or shoot an arrow there.” Oh, what a law of Providence is that word of promise! “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” No law of material nature is more abiding. “He speaks, and it is done. He commands, and it stands.”

CHAPTER XVI.

MOHAMMED PROTECTING THE TRUE CHURCH : THE ALBIGENSES.

“Their fates were painted ere the men were born.”

FAMINE ever follows on the track of war. The Saracens looked from the Atlantic coast over conquered but exhausted countries. They were impoverished by the ruin that had blighted the creations of genius and the fields of the reaper along their own broad and desolate path. Before them lay a vast ocean; behind them a social wilderness,—cities broken down and without walls or enterprise, provinces uncultivated or forsaken. Europe alone expanded her untouched treasure and inflamed their cupidity and their courage. The narrow Straits of Gibraltar presented no barrier to their resistless progress. An Andalusian kingdom was soon acquired and added to the dominions of the caliph.

An ocean, breaking at their feet, had turned

back the Saracens; but the Pyrenees and the warlike nations of the frigid North invited their squadrons to new enterprises of war. France is also invaded. Her fair provinces are oppressed by gathering armies and horses running to battle. The sanctuary of the sacramental host is now on a sudden thrown open to the spoiler, lies in the immediate vicinity of the doubtful strife. The Rhone alone separates the Albigenses from the scimitar and the Koran. And here, as on the invaded borders of Asia Minor, the conquerors of the world are again arrested, and the dismayed remnant never return to gather the spoil or bury their dead.

“After a bloody field, in which Abderame was slain, the Saracens in the close of the evening retired to their camp. In the disorder and despair of the night the various tribes of Yemen and Damascus, of Africa and Spain, were provoked to turn their arms against each other; the remains of their host were suddenly dissolved, and each emir consulted his safety by a hasty and separate retreat. At the dawn of day the stillness of a hostile camp was suspected by the victorious Christians. On the report of their spies they ventured to explore the riches of the vacant tents. . . . The Arabs never

resumed the conquest of Gaul; and they were soon driven beyond the Pyrenees.”*

Ah me! but for this, what might have been the result on the ensuing day! On the issues of its bloody debate hung the fates of Europe, the church, and the world. Ten thousand centres of purity and progress were at that moment in reach of the scimitar,—might have been obliterated forever. The last hunted remnant of a pure Christianity lay exposed and helpless in contiguous valleys. The terrible crisis had come; and now either Heaven must interpose and destroy the destroyer, or leave the night of an Asiatic barbarism to spread itself for unknown ages over the fair provinces of Western civilization. “It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men that had not the seal of God in their foreheads.” This was the impassable barrier that met them at Philadelphia and on the Rhone, and contains both the philosophy and the secret of the successes and the failures of the Saracens.

The new wine was in the cluster that adorned the vine of the Alps; and Heaven had said,

* Gibbon, ch. 52, p. 290

“Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.” Paul, in his journey to Spain, had planted in these secluded regions a church that had never adhered to Rome. Great accessions had been made to its numbers when the remonstrants and the persecuted, from time to time, retired from the open idolatry of Christendom into the shelter of the wilderness. And to that fact, and not to her want of guilt, Europe owed her preservation. Sodom could not fall while Lot was there, nor could Jerusalem, until the righteous had made good their escape to the mountains. And, as God had chosen the heart of Europe, the gorges of the Alps, in which to gather and cherish his spiritual family, that event became the living source of security to the West,—kept the Asiatic scourge, like lightning on the skirts of a cloud, to expend itself on the borders of a guilty land, which Heaven would not destroy because a blessing was in it.

CHAPTER XVII.

FOUNDING OF BAGDAD THE END OF THE PROPHETIC MONTHS.

“Their power was to hurt men five months.”—REV. ix. 10.

MOHAMMED, according to Dean Prideaux, was born at Mecca, in the month of May, A.D. 571. Others leave the point undecided between A.D. 569 and 571. When he was forty years of age, he took upon him the style of “The Apostle of God,” and began to propagate his imposture. In one hundred and fifty years from this time his followers ceased from aggressive wars and founded the “City of Peace,” or, which is the same thing, the city of Bagdad.

From that period (A.D. 762) the caliphs abandoned the coarse habits and cultivated hardness of warriors, and gave themselves up to luxuries that rivalled in their expensive magnificence the palmiest displays of the Babylonian or Persian princes. Here, amid

gorgeous palaces and in the embraces of the harem, expired forever the martial glory of the Saracens.

The interval between A.D. 612 and A.D. 762 is just equal to John's five prophetic months, or one hundred and fifty days, of years. If, however, we assume the correctness of either of the above dates assigned as the time of the birth of Mohammed, the discrepancy would be too inconsiderable to awaken any suspicion of a want of truth in the prophecy, since mistakes of a few years in such calculations are but too common. If intelligent individuals among us even now are found who are quite uncertain as to the time of their own births, notwithstanding the living witnesses and the recency of the chronological era to be fixed, we ought not to be surprised that a possible mistake of a few years obscured the question relating to the time of Mohammed's birth,—a fact lying back more than twelve centuries from our own times, in an obscure spot, in a barbarous age, and among a people who reckoned time by lunar months and with confessed inaccuracy.

And, as John was guided by inspiration, I assume his correctness, and from this source confirm the infallible correctness of the com-

mon reckoning. In assuming the absolute correctness of any other date, we are left at all uncertainties in the mists of an era that lies back of the Hegira itself, and in the very chaos of Arabian chronology.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND MOHAMMED.

To make them from restraint and conscience free,
Bad as thyself, or worse,—if worse can be.”

THE wars of the Saracens were prolonged through a period of one hundred and fifty years, with but partial intermissions. Their path of carnage likewise was made through the most densely-peopled portions of the globe. It left desolate its richest cities and provinces. “They destroyed wonderfully. And they had a king over them, which was the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”*

The waste of human life must have been immense. To say nothing of the incalculable losses in beautiful villas, castles, cities, palaces,—to agriculture, commerce, and literature,—the loss of life in battles and sieges, and the loss of im-

* Rev. ix. 11.

mortal men, perishing without repentance, or living to die in apostasy from Christ, justifies the designation "*Destroyer*,"—points out the true character of the woe, and of the manner in which the Mohammedans rose to power.

All along the line of their march, in town and country, they have left everywhere their broad trail of enduring desolation. Cities sit solitary; thronged streets are become a portion for foxes; the raven's noisy croak rises from forsaken balconies and from the area of palaces and theatres. The brave defenders of their invaded country sleep where they fell, amid ruins which have never been restored. Progressive civilization, which obliterates elsewhere the ravages of war or of time, disturbs not their resting-places. The mould of ages covers their bones.

The angel that presided at the incantations of Hara was the "destroyer." He aided the inventiveness of his dupe, deceived the deceiver, instructed his revenge, poured venom on his bitter communings respecting his persecutors at Mecca, whispered in his attentive ear of the sweetness of bloody reprisals, made him respect his own skill and courage, and filled him with the lust of success. Animated with pandemonial zeal, he grasped the burning brand, and felt it to be instinctive with the

successes of his diabolical mission. He began, and continued till he died, the work of "*destruction.*"

The same angel also that inspired the fury of the prophet inspired the courage of his lieutenants, and led them on against the church in their mission of woe. The same untiring malignity that led Cain to murder his brother, that led Balaam to desire to curse whom God had not cursed, that led Herod to slay the babes of Bethlehem, that conducted the trial before Pilate, and that directed the tragedy of the cross, led on the remorseless bands of Arabia upon Christendom.

The result sought was the utter undoing of the entire church, both the true and the false; and that result was held in arrest only because the reins of an ultimate restraint had been placed in the hand of bleeding mercy. The same mighty Man-child that ever confounded the dark policies of the pit was he who protected the Nestorians, the Paulicians, the refugees of the monasteries, his loved ones in Philadelphia, and who broke up and scattered the army of the aliens on the banks of the Rhone.

The failure of the destroyer was the failure of a bridled rage, of a hungry tiger that had

reached the end of his chain and that still roared after his prey. The same blessed Messiah who said in the days of his flesh, "Come out of him, thou unclean spirit," had also said, "Hurt not the grass of the field, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads." This, and this only, was *it* that bounded and controlled the rage of the destroyer. But for this, there would have been no limit to the progress of the woe.

The hand that opened the cave of Hara was the hand of him "that had the power of death," unbarring the gates of perdition. The spirit that presided over the dusky warriors that rushed up from the recesses of the desert was that of "*Abaddon*." The field of his conquests was that world which the cross had turned into the theatre of redemption. That lost world he would retain as his own, and spread, over the bosom of a blighted orb and a perished humanity, the crimes and the woes of hell.

Contrasts there are between Christ and Mohammed; but they are all too intense. They are rather the *contests* between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The object aimed at on the part of the adversary

is the ruin of Christ and of his kingdom in this world. The master-spirit in the contest is that of the angel of the bottomless pit. When first created, he kept not his first estate or principality, but left his own habitation, then assigned him, to invade that of others. Ours was invaded, and paradise and immortality lost. And at this point it is that God interposes and puts enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Not that, previously to this period, harmony had existed between Christ and Belial; but now, while the world should stand, they should be placed in the relations of an intimate and a necessary antagonism. Satan, by the fall, rose, in accordance with the decrees of eternal justice, to be the tormentor of his dupes,—had given to him “the power of death.”* But, while the evil, once originated, must take its course according to determinate and immutable laws, God, without changing these, originated a new and an independent centre of life in a Redeemer, who should in the fulness of the times destroy him that had the power of death.

Placed thus in the same world, there opens,

* Heb. ii.

from the fall to the last shock of time, the conflict of ages. And this it is that we are to see in the field of blood over which waves the red right hand of Ishmael. It is Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels.

But even between such antagonisms there are contrasts. They may be drawn, just as they are between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, good and evil. Commencing at Mecca and at Bethlehem, they meet and astonish us in every step of our way.

The words of war and slaughter come up from the cave of Hara; "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men" are the utterances that reach the ears of prostrate and adoring shepherds in Judea. Mohammed came to destroy men's lives; Jesus came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Mohammed stands with garments rolled in blood, waving his dripping scimitar over the scattered ranks of death; Jesus went about doing good. His progress was ever along the wards of a vast hospital. Sights of woe ever met his weeping eye, and words of comfort ever fell from his blessed lips. While he moved through Judea, there was "balm in Gilead; there was a Physician there." When the eye

saw him, it blessed him; when the ear heard, it bore witness to him, because he delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help.

Mohammed was guilty of a wholesale and remorseless assassination of the Jews. "Seven hundred were dragged in chains to the market-places of the city. They descended alive into the grave, prepared for their execution and burial; and the apostle beheld with an inflexible eye the slaughter of his helpless enemies."* But when Peter drew his sword, Jesus healed the wounded Malchus and rebuked his hasty disciple. Nor was this the policy of weakness or the resort of fear; for twelve legions of angels hung in invisible squadrons around him to bathe the holy mountains in blood for him. He was the Prince of peace.

Mohammed taught the duty of forgiveness and harmony among his followers, but nevertheless devoted all the rest of mankind to tribute or the sword. Jesus said, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that scornfully use and persecute you." And

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 134.

when, abandoned by all, he hung upon the cross, and heard the insults and the scoffs of those who cast vile imputations in his teeth, he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The very wretch that pierced his side but opened the fountains of his own salvation; and in that very city which wronged and slew him,—whose blood-steeped pavements cried loudest to the frowning heavens for retribution,—in that very city was the apostolic commission first opened, were the propositions of pardon first made. The army likewise which rose and spread his empire had their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The sword they wielded was the sword of the Spirit; and friends and foes were alike pointed to the bleeding cross as prisoners of hope.

It is quite too revolting—quite beyond the pale of even a tolerable delicacy—to take up the question of comparative moral purity.

When we pass from the divine presence of him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and begin with that satyr of the desert, that unclean beast in married life, who justified himself in promiscuous intercourse by pleading a dispensation,—when we attempt to *touch*, even in this

respect, that indelible blot on the cheek of humanity,—the touch itself is pollution. It is a shame even to speak of those things, in any minuteness of detail, which were done by the prophet of Mecca.

And, as to truth, it was foreign to the daily utterances of the hardened impostor. To talk of his probable sincerity may suit the sentimentalist, or the infidel in want of a reason; but it is difficult for the candid to be in such a milky humour respecting one whose very successes depended on successful falsehood, hypocrisy, and the sword.

The signs and wonders attesting the verity of our Lord's blessed mission are sought for in vain in the history of the Arabian prophet. The bed of lust and the blood of murder alone speak for him, and point him out as the enemy of Christ and of man. Contrasts there are indeed; but they are contrasts of things that differ in nature, and are in necessary and endless opposition.

The power and permanency of evil may be traced by the historian and the philosopher to the deep impressions made by one mind of singular strength on kindred tribes and on successive generations; but the instructed disciple in accounting for the phenomena must

look behind the veil to a more potent individuality, ever active in its untiring malignity, which reproduces in a successor the wasted energies of the fallen prophet and perpetuates the woe. And it was for this purpose—that we might not lose, in the detail of visible agencies, the vision of the one ever-active master-spirit that stamps its own dark features on Islamism from generation to generation—that it is said, in concluding the delineation, “And they had a king over them, which was the angel of the bottomless pit.”

One of the twelve disciples rises from the table of the Lord, goes out and betrays his Master. We look at causes as they appear to *us*. He is exposed by our Lord’s reference to his dipping in the dish. The eyes of all turn on him, and he is offended. He had thought of the profits of treason before, but now he is enraged and resolved; and why? The ultimate determination of his will is traceable to an invisible agency: “Satan entered into him.”

Ananias sold his lands and kept back part of the price. His vanity was clamorous for the reputation of liberality, and his covetousness for the possession of his golden treasures. To cater to the gratification of both the one

and the other required the utterance of a lie to the Holy Ghost. Such are the outward phenomena: but the true cause was invisible; and, in an account that should comprehend all the facts in the history of the crime of Ananias, that invisible cause must be made prominent: —“Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?”

In like manner also, in the history of all evil in those who deliberately enter upon a course of opposition to Christ and to his kingdom, there is the same account to be given of the secret cause which determined the will and instigated the iniquity. Satan enters into the erring soul, fills the false heart. And, indeed, all evil men, respected as individuals or as communities, when at war with Christ and his church, “have a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SARACENIC MERGED IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

“In the small compass of a grave,
In endless night they sleep, unwept, unknown :
No bard had they to make all time their own.”

BYRON.

“One woe is past.”—REV. ix. 12.

THE sudden and vast expansion of the empire of the caliphs was the wind in its sails that dashed it on the rocks. It resulted in destructive domestic wars and in the erection of separate and powerful states.

Spain, Mauritania, Africa, and Egypt, were severed by distance, interest, and the sword, from their Oriental masters. Arabia also, too remote and sparsely peopled to form an influential and a continued centre for a great monarchy, the resort of fierce and impracticable fanatics, the theatre of strifes, of assassinations, and stained often with patrician blood, was finally abandoned from necessity rather than policy.

A new and splendid city, founded by Alnanzor, rose as by enchantment on the eastern bank of the Tigris, and near its confluence with the Euphrates. To it was transferred the throne and palace, the staff of the Apostle of God, and the other ensigns of civil and of sacred authority. And, though the rival monarchies of the West held for ages a position of grandeur almost equal to that of the Abassides, yet, when the shepherd-kings rose to supremacy in Bagdad, they brought back again to the ancient site of the long-fallen Babylon the balance of power and the revived "beauty of the Chaldees' excellency."

Hence, in designating the change, and the continuation at the same time of the same power, the Euphrates, and the innumerable armies of horsemen that on a sudden rushed from its confines, are made the striking emblems of the second woe.

The smoke, issuing from a pit, suited the locality of Mecca, sunk as it was in a gulf formed by sharp and naked mountains, under torrid suns, and surrounded by burning sands. And when the martial zeal of the Saracenic empire revived again in its original prestige on the banks of the Euphrates, and, issuing from thence, reproduced the first woe through-

out the southern hemisphere in more than its original bitterness, finishing a ruin that had been but begun, and completely subverting the throne of the Cæsars, it becomes quite natural, in a continued symbolic delineation, to speak of it as the second woe, and as issuing from the celebrated river on the banks of which it unexpectedly culminates and becomes again the scourge and terror of the world.

The Nestorian patriarch residing at Meru, on the southwestern slopes of those vast steppes that ascend toward the confines of China, had observed the progress of a race of Scythian shepherds toward the wide savannahs of Transoxiana and Carisme. This fact he at length communicated to the patriarch at Bagdad, intimating that they were hastening to change the face of Asia and the fortunes of the world. Repairing to the council-chamber of the caliphs, the letter was read to the astonished chiefs.

It stated that "a people numerous as the locust-cloud had burst from the mountains between Thibet and Katan, and were pouring down upon the fertile plains of Kashgar. They were commanded by seven kings, each at the head of seventy thousand horsemen. The warriors were as swarthy as Indians.

They used no water in their ablutions, nor did they cut their hair. They were most skilful archers, and were content with simple and frugal fare. Their horses were fed upon meat.”*

Such were the first intimations of approaching change. It, however, fell upon the ears of a degenerate race, who, though descended from the mighty conquerors of Syria, had entombed the hardness and daring of the earlier caliphs in the magnificent harems of Bagdad.

Extremes meet in their history. “Mohammed used at first, when preaching in his mosque at Medina, to lean upon a post of a palm-tree driven into the ground; but, being now invested with greater dignity, he had a pulpit built which had two steps up to it and a seat within. When Othman was caliph he hung it with tapestry, and Moawiyah raised it six steps higher.”†

Omar the caliph, in his journey to Jerusalem, “rode upon a red camel with a couple of sacks, in one of which he carried that sort of provision which the Arabs call ‘sawik,’ which is either barley, rice, or wheat, sodden and

* “Nineveh and its Remains,” chap. viii.

† Ockley, p. 46.

unhusked; the other was full of fruits. Before him he carried a very great leathern bottle, (very necessary in those desert countries to put water in;) behind him a large wooden platter. When encamped, he sat on the ground to eat. Then, filling his platter with the sawik, he very liberally entertained his fellow-travellers, who, without distinction, ate with him, all out of the same dish.”*

“Having met with some of the Saracens, richly dressed in silks that they had taken by way of plunder after the battle of Yarmuk, he spoiled all their pride; for he caused them to be dragged along in the dirt with their faces downward, and their clothes to be rent in pieces.”†

But when success had crowned their arms, and for three centuries they had had the lordship of the southern hemisphere,—an empire in which the sun rose and set,—the contrast with the simplicity of earlier times became intense.

“When the Greek ambassador visited the court of Bagdad, the caliph’s whole army,” says the historian Abulfeda, “both horse and foot, was under arms, which together made a body of one hundred and sixty thousand men.

* Ockley, p. 208.

† Ibid. p. 211.

His state-officers—the favourite slaves—stood near him in splendid apparel, their belts glittering with gold and gems. Near them were seven thousand eunuchs, four thousand of them white, the remainder black. The porters (or door-keepers) were in number seven hundred. Barges and boats, with the most superb decorations, were seen swimming upon the Tigris.

“Nor was the palace itself less splendid, in which were hung up thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry, twelve thousand five hundred of which were of silk, embroidered with gold. The carpets on the floor were twenty-two thousand. One hundred lions were brought out, with a keeper to each lion.

“Among the other spectacles of rare and splendid luxury was a tree of gold and silver, spreading into eighteen large branches, on which, and on the lesser boughs, sat a variety of birds made of the same precious metals, as well as the limbs of the tree. While the machinery effected spontaneous motions, the several birds warbled their natural harmony. Through this scene of magnificence the Greek ambassador was led by the vizier to the foot of the caliph’s throne.”*

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 298.

Such splendour, however, was but the final blaze of an expiring greatness, to go out all the sooner for its unnatural brightness. The very menials that composed the trains of servants, and the very soldiers that filled the ranks of the army, defended the city, and upheld a decrepit dynasty, were foreigners, who learned to despise their effeminate employers and the confessed imbecility which required their aid. The transition from idolatry to Mohammedanism is easy. They embraced the short creed of the prophet with sincerity, and thus, though of a different origin, amalgamated their nationality with that of their recent masters.

Having, after a signal victory, founded the dynasty of the shepherd-kings in Persia, Togrul Beg, their rude and successful chief, aspired to the throne and sceptre to the defence of which he had been called amid the domestic and bloody factions of Bagdad.

Marrying the daughter of the caliph whom his sword supported, he died A.D. 1063, leaving no issue. Alp Arslan, his nephew, succeeded to his title as sultan; and from this period "his name, after that of the caliph, was pronounced in the public prayers of the Mos-

lems.”* The union and the revolution was now complete, and the Turkish sultany had succeeded in every respect to the caliphate.

The prophetic interval of three hundred and ninety-one years lies between this period and A.D. 1453, during which the four angels remained bound in the great river, and prepared, whenever they should be summoned, to rush forth and slay “the third part of men.”†

The first third fell before the Goths and Vandals; the second before the caliphs; the third was now destined to fall before the Ottomans. Such is the origin of the Turkish empire; and thus are connected the first and the second woes.

The sword of the dying Mohammed was effectually wielded by his lieutenants. It became the symbol of his faith and the instrument of its success. When his followers threw it aside for the trowel, the plough, the lancet, studied the instructions of wisdom and sought the embraces of pleasure, the empire, like its founder, lost its vitality and sunk into the tomb.

Just at this point it is, also, that its resuscitation commences. The Scythian shepherds rise to the dominion, and, while they trample

* Gibbon, vol. v. p. 511.

† Rev. ix. 15.

its ashes, warm into unexpected life the current of its blood. The two races mingle into one, in the principles of their faith, in their intermarriages with each other; and the long-spent fury of Ishmael revives again in the children of the East.

The empire of the shepherds remained a unit, swayed by a single mind, until the death of Malek Shah, when the succession was disputed in bloody debates by his brother and his four sons. These ended in the erection of the four sultanies,—viz.: Persia, Roum, Syria, and Kerman. These are the noted ministers of divine and long-restrained vengeance,—the four angels of the great river on whose banks they rise to power and from whence they spread their conquests.

The prophet speaks of them as the *four* angels of the river, since it was during their fourfold division that the binding processes, in the wars of the cross, commenced.

It seems also quite appropriate to retain this designation even after these divisions terminated, or to give the title to the main division or branch of the four, when it finally absorbs the strength of the other branches and becomes the prominent instrument in executing the decrees of Providence. As they had been

bound when existing as the four sultanies, so the loosing of them would suggest that the restraint was taken off from them all alike and at the same time; which was the fact when their common foes, the Crusaders, had finally left the battle-fields of Asia.

The preparation also "to slay the third part of men" belonged alike to all the sultanies; since during the period of the preparation to the time in which they were loosed to slay, they were a mutual aid to each other, and during the oppressions of the Crusades their combined power was needed for mutual preservation from extinction.

It does not hence seem of much force to urge inasmuch as the Turkish branch of the great monarchy of the Euphrates mainly effected the overthrow of Greece, that therefore the other branches could not have been included in the processes of the long-continued preparation.

It is quite obvious, on the contrary, that the four sultanies mutually sustained each other amid the wars that threatened their total ruin as separate or as confederate states; and hence the processes of the preparation, the binding and the loosing, belong alike to the four, and it is proper and natural so to speak of them.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CRUSADES—THEIR CAUSES AND ENDS.

“Hail, Calvary, thou mountain hoar,
Wet with our Redeemer’s gore!
Ye trampled tombs, ye fanes forlorn,
Ye stones by tears of pilgrims worn!
Your ravish’d honours to restore,
Fearless we climb this hostile shore!”

WARTON.

THE Turks, in the zeal of recent converts and in the cruelty of slaves just risen to be masters, exceeded the Saracens in intolerance and oppression, demanded of the pilgrims in the holy city impossible sums, dragged their patriarch by the hair of his head on the pavement, and turned the plains of Asia into a highway for their robber-bands. Princes, nobles, the ministers of religion and trains of unarmed peasants, on their way to the holy sepulchre, were alike pillaged, beaten, slain, and sometimes their stomachs ripped open and examined for treasures supposed to have been swallowed.

There was in the Turkish accession to Mo-

hammedanism a revival of the zeal and cruelty of the tiger Caled, and of those that followed him in "the paths of blood." The time however for their peculiar mission had not yet arrived. They were anticipating it by centuries. They must therefore back again to their enclosures, lose Palestine and Peninsular Asia, and struggle in vain to burst their bonds or break from the frail barriers of the Euphrates, until the time appointed.

In God's providential government of the world, his care for his church is ever a controlling consideration.

When her safety is endangered, the caverns and gorges of the Alps become the hollow of his hand in which he hides her. His seal is placed upon the forehead of his people, and his protective shield hangs at the gate of the monastery as soon as they enter there. An invisible rampart surrounds Philadelphia, because she shelters those who kept the word of his patience. His people are in the valleys, and a vast army falls without hand, and flies in hopeless disarray from the banks of the Rhone.

And to that same tender care of his church, so obvious in the past and so cheering in our anticipations of the future, are we to look for the causes of the Crusades.

The voice of Peter the Hermit, summoning the fierce chivalry of the North to the rescue of the holy sepulchre, was the voice of God, commanding those who would have been sure to have arrested his gracious work in blood to a distant land, to gratify there their love of war, to expend there their martial rage on the turbulent sultanies, and finally to disappear there themselves, and bury their hosts forever in the oblivion of the desert.

There is a choice in approaching or liable evils, and in the selection from among which of one rather than another a providential intelligence discovers its wisdom.

An apostate is also often a persecuting church, the implacable foe of Zion. But, evil and destructive though it be, yet there are occasional mitigations, periods of intervening repose, and here and there a ray of a pure and sanctifying light. But a false system of faith, such as that of the Arabian prophet, is a ruin that leaves behind it no trace of that Christianity which it wholly exterminates.

Catholic Europe, as compared with Britain and the United States, is one among the dark places of the earth; still, an intenser darkness broods over Mohammedan countries.

To bind these angels, therefore, within the

limits of their original dominions, was the will and the work of a protective Providence. God waits not till the myriads of the Turkish horse slake their thirst in the rivers and fountains of the Alps, ere he rouses to the defence of his bride in the wilderness. He anticipates and turns away the threatened ruin by turning the tide of battle to the East.

This event, then, is invested with a peculiar interest not only in itself, as it is a history of remarkable occurrences, but also with a relative interest, as it is the next step in the series of those processes by which the church is preserved from extermination, and by means of which she is enabled to spread through Europe the imperishable elements of the great Reformation.

In A.D. 1095 Peter the Hermit visited Jerusalem, and saw and felt the brutal violence of the Turks with emotions of unutterable horror. The patriarch also recounted the trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and exactions, to which his suffering flock had been subjected under the new regime. He witnessed also, with his own eyes, the tomb of Jesus defaced, the church of the resurrection violated, and the pilgrims perishing in want and misery around him.

Convinced that expostulation would but tempt to heavier oppressions, and that, if Europe would preserve the poor remains of an expiring Christianity from being entombed, amid the holiest memorials of her triumphs, in the very church of the resurrection, in the very sepulchre of Messias, she must do it with the sword, he resolved to arm her against Asia.

He was an enthusiast, whose religious emotions, uninformed by revelation, took their complexion from the superstitions of the times. To him a hermitage was as congenial as Hara to Mohammed. Here his excited fancy created visions of saints and angels, of Jesus, Mary, and the martyrs; and here the arch-deceiver inflamed his resentment and his zeal, until he turned his willing dupe into the enraptured seer, commissioned to call the West, not to the humanity of the Prince of peace, but to the carnival of blood in Palestine.

When he came to Rome, Urban the Second, influenced either by policy or fanaticism, endorsed his inspiration and cherished his burning ardour by his pontifical benediction.

The flesh in this extraordinary man had become subject to the spirit. His strong and wiry frame, though attenuated by fasting and

frenzy, seemed but to increase in its power of endurance by the energy of a soul that absorbed and supplied its vitality with a higher principle of life. Covered with a coarse garment, with head and feet bare, and swaying a ponderous crucifix, he rode through Italy and France, the universal centre of an amazing interest, summoning the church to the enterprise of a holy war.

There are times in which such an apparition would but awaken the merriment of the gay or the pity of the benevolent. But the example and the success of Mohammed had made its impression on a church which had lost her Bible in the manuscripts of a dead language and had gone back in the name of the cross to be governed by a disguised paganism, to regard the shield and battle-axe as more reliable than the sword of the Spirit in the defence and propagation of the gospel. The bread of the sacrament had also become a divinity to be worshipped. And, by an easy transition, the sepulchre of Jesus was invested with an awful sanctity.

A kiss imprinted on the black stone of the Kaaba had never been so impassioned as the kiss of the pilgrim on the cold and stony floor of a Saviour's tomb. It was a means of salva-

tion, a sign of love and devotion, more meritorious than penitent emotions or the righteousness of faith.

And when the dark eye of the hermit flashed at the recital of the wrongs and the sacrileges he himself had witnessed, rage crimsoned every cheek, and the long-cherished desire for retaliations on Asia turned into decrees in the bosoms of princes.

A council of "two hundred bishops, four hundred of the clergy, and thirty thousand of the laity," assembled at Placentia. The ambassadors also of the emperor reached the spot from Constantinople.

These united in urging the Latins instantly to arm, not to wait for the inevitable invasion of Europe, but to anticipate and forestall that event by becoming themselves the invaders.

The vast concourse heard the recital of dangers imminent, and wrongs already inflicted on a bleeding church and long endured without either mitigation or redress, with tears of sympathy, and sent back to Alexius their solemn pledges of material aid.

From this great council went out also the coadjutors of the hermit, seconding his efforts, spreading themselves throughout the provinces, addressing excited and superstitious crowds,

and invoking the war-spirit in the remotest villages.

France in the same autumn became also the theatre of another vast conclave, whose deliberations ended in the active mustering of the armies of the cross.

From the borders of France the successful Peter led out sixty thousand fanatics. A poor soldier led on another band, and still another of twenty thousand started from Germany. Their path was followed by two hundred thousand more.

But these wild hordes were those whom want and crime had made outlaws; and the evils they inflicted on their way to Asia were calamities too grievous to bear, roused kingdoms to arm in self-defence against their fellow-Christians, and suggest to us the necessity of such a drain upon European society to make a revival of true religion possible within its limits.

After incredible crimes and sufferings, their lawless thousands reach Asia, and encounter the Turks in the vicinity of Nice. Here they all perish. A mausoleum was made of their bones on the plains near the city by the victorious Solyman. The princes and knights, the priests and peasants, that composed, after them, the better-disciplined armies of the cross, were

men of Belial also, and providentially separated by their cruel and superstitious sympathies from the masses of a less intolerant and a more hopeful humanity.

Those that took the cross and started for Asia are estimated at six millions. When this eruption of human beings passed in review before the daughter of Alexius, she is said to have exclaimed, "Europe is loosened from her foundations and hurled against Asia."

Before this mighty army Solyman is totally defeated, flies in despair toward the Euphrates; and, from this period to the end of the Crusades, Asia becomes the battle-field of contending nations and the charnel-house for their bones.

The chivalry of Europe were governed by a law of exalted gallantry to ladies, and of profound and senseless veneration for the ministers of a religion whose badge they wore and whose holy places they rescued; but here ended the virtues of these grim and bloody Caleds of the North.

Simon de Montfort, the beloved son and champion of the church, was a stanch murderer. Courtesy to a lady was a law of his knighthood; and on one occasion he preserved several women from military outrage.

But the same Simon laid waste the country of the Albigenses with fire and sword; and when the castle of Menerbe, on the frontiers of Spain, surrendered, for the single and only crime of constancy in their religious opinions,* this true specimen of Western chivalry united with the papal legate in arranging the fagots and in kindling the fire that burned to death a hundred and forty-one Christians of both sexes.

“The sword of Godfrey divided a Turk from the shoulder to the haunch, and one-half of the infidel fell to the ground, while the other was transported by his horse to the city gate. As Robert of Normandy rode against his antagonist, ‘I devote thy head,’ he piously exclaimed, ‘to the demons of hell;’ and that head was instantly cloven to the breast by the resistless stroke of his descending falchion.”†

When Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Crusaders, Bohemond and Tancred, Baldwin, Godfrey, the Roberts, and others, the illustrious leaders in the siege, followed by trains of devotees, and with heads and feet bare, as-

* For the same offence, in this crusade against the Albigenses, a million were slain in France alone. Knights and Ecclesiastics united in the work of slaughter “with infinite joy.” (See Sismondi’s History.)

† Gibbon, vol. v. p. 581.

cended the slopes of Calvary to bedew with tears the precious sepulchre of the Lord, and to imprint their tenderest kisses on its walls.

Incredible, however, to relate, these very men, so intensely Christian as to make even the rock touched once by the body of Jesus most sacred in their esteem, had just arisen from the banquet of blood,—had just massacred seventy thousand of all ages and sexes without mercy or discrimination. For three days the area of the slaughter-house stretched from wall to wall throughout Jerusalem. The cry for mercy and the crash of the battle-axe resounded on every side; and, thus reeking in the blood of recent murder, came these unrelenting men up the sides of Calvary to worship the sepulchre.

Such were the men, whose tender mercies were cruel, from whom Europe and the church had been delivered by the armies of the cross, that for one hundred and ninety years bound the sultanies.

CHAPTER XXI.

PETER WALDO ON THE TRACK OF PETER THE HERMIT.

“When Waldo, flying from the apostate West,
In German wilds his righteous cause confess’d.”

MONTGOMERY.

LET us now turn to Zion in the wilderness ; and, while Ishmael takes peace from the world in Asia, it will be interesting to trace the progress of the church left behind by that flood, of reprobate humanity disappearing in successive surges in Oriental aceldemas.

Fifteen years after the commencement of the second Crusade, and forty-four years before the establishment of the Inquisition, A.D. 1206, there occurs a very interesting revival of religion.

To Peter Waldo is the church indebted for the first modern translation of the New Testament in the vulgar tongue. This translation, and his apostolic zeal and success, made him the object of papal persecution. Himself and

followers fled from Lyons; and, as they went, they spread everywhere the principles and the impulses of the Reformation. The existing churches caught the spirit of their afflicted brethren, and the attack on Waldo became a wide-spread source of salvation.

In the province of Picardy—the place of the nativity of Peter the Hermit, and on which region he drew most largely—Peter Waldo found a generation of right-minded men. Here his success was great, among a people that would not be induced to expel him or renounce his doctrine.

Philip Augustus invaded this favoured spot, battered down three hundred houses and several walled towns, and pursued the flying converts into Flanders, where several suffered martyrdom.

Peter himself escaped into Bohemia, another broad and beautiful valley drained of its bigots to recruit the armies of the cross. Here the word of God grew and multiplied. In Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, in Alsace, and along the valleys of the Rhine, powerful revivals spread their healing influence. Persecutions indeed arose; hundreds were imprisoned or slain; but Christianity was not exterminated, as it was ultimately in

Spain and Calabria, as it might well have been over all Europe but for the Crusades.

In A.D. 1228, Reinerius Saccho, the Roman Inquisitor, represents their numbers to have been very great, the sect to have been most generally diffused through every part of Europe and found in all its circles.

Certain French bishops “desired the monks of the Inquisition to defer a little their work of imprisonment till the Pope was advertised of the great numbers apprehended,—numbers so great that it was impossible to defray the charges of their subsistence, and even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them.”* But would such a difficulty in the work of extermination have stayed its progress, had not the bigotry of Rome wasted its energies in its foreign wars?

Along the bloody trail of that demon army, had it been permitted to sweep through the Alps, we would not have gathered up a remnant from the papal slaughter-houses of eight hundred thousand Waldenses, nor would the blood of a million martyrs in the twelfth century have been the seed, but rather the grave, of the church.

* Millner, vol. ii. p. 65.

The four sultanies are bound for Zion's sake; kept back from invading Europe, curbed within the valleys of the Euphrates, to subserve the purposes of salvation; and the very hand that forges the restraints that bind them is the hand of a parricide, turned from the home his remorseless cruelty would otherwise have desolated, to grapple with Ishmael and perish at last himself in the fruitless struggle.

The history of Ishmael, or of the Crusaders in their Asiatic wars, is but the recital of the outrages, the woes, and the strifes of ages.

And, as the panorama opens in the fierce reprisals of the desert, or unfolds itself in the empire of the caliphs, or shifts again in the rise of the Turks or the wars of the cross, we have but the painful reproductions successively, with but little variation, of the same sad pictures of ruin. And from it we instinctively turn away.

But, when the church is ever the centre of a thrilling interest in heavenly places, and men and wars and empires are made to be subsidiary to its preservation, (though they knew it not,) then the aspect of unalleviated violence and wrong is mitigated, and we watch that frail ark, now in the trough of the sea, and now on the crest of the surge, and now in the eddies

of the Maelstrom, with an emotion of gratified wonder and veneration; since, while one and another among the mighty disappear,—since Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome, the caliphs, and the Crusaders, struggle in vain in that wild uproar and are successively dashed upon the rocks,—that frail ark, invested with a protected life, piloted by an unseen hand, encounters and survives the same dangers, and is seen to emerge at last from the night of ages and the wreck of empires, itself unchanged, unharmed, as when first it was floated out and left to make its own perilous way across the dark and pathless ocean.

Milton's wars of angels are invested with interest, since the good oppose the bad and triumph, and Heaven shines all the brighter for the trial of her imperilled and preserved virtue. And this it is that makes the world's prophetic history most interesting; since the bride, the Lamb's wife, is ever the centre of an amazing love, the ultimate care of a resistless Providence. Around her otherwise defenceless home the angels keep perpetual vigil, and in her palaces God is known for a refuge.

And, while she is often at the very verge of an inevitable destruction, she is all the more pure for her trials and her triumphs. And we

love for her sake to glance over earth's bloody annals, not simply to gather and chronicle the details of wars and wrongs,—subjects only and always revolting,—but for her sake, that we may gaze after her through the dark night and in the deep sea where she is ever followed by the outgoings of those feet once nailed to the cross for her sins and that ever tread down for her the fury of the waves.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONSTANTINOPLE MENACED.

“Greece! thine ancient lamp is spent:
Thou art thine own monument.”

MONTGOMERY.

FROM A.D. 1063—at which point of time we commence our reckoning of the hour, the day, the month, and the year, of this prophecy—to the fall of Constantinople, in A.D. 1453, there stretches an interval of three hundred and ninety-one years.

The Crusaders lose Acre, the Holy Land, and disappear from Asia, in A.D. 1291, leaving the sultanies loose from their long-continued restraints to rush forth upon abandoned Asia and impoverished Europe. No sooner do their foes disappear, than, true to their instincts, they begin to execute before the time their terrible mission. They at once spread their conquests over Rumania, Anatolia, and across into Europe as far as the Danube. Constantinople is itself invested, and lies at the mercy of the foe.

“The third part of men” are thus unexpectedly placed in imminent peril of being slain, and that long before the fulness of the prophetic hour. But Providence is always equal to all exigencies. Its prepared and reserved force rushes to the rescue of the helpless city and binds again the Euphratean angels.

In A.D. 1356—about forty-six years before Bajazet menaced the falling throne of the effeminate Cæsars—a poor adventurer, escaped from prison, flings himself into the Oxus, and reaches with extraordinary exertions the opposite bank. After leading for some time the life of an outlaw, he returned to his native Transoxiana. Here he gathered around him his little army and delivered his country from the usurpations of its conquerors. Ambition had already taken full possession of his soul, and the fortunate Tamerlane now began to aspire to the conquest of the world.

In the message that he sent to Houssein, he expressed, while yet an inferior, his aspirations and his policies:—“He who wishes to embrace the bride of royalty must kiss her across the edge of the sharp sword.” Guided by this maxim, he pursued his career of conquest till the twenty-seventh crown glittered on his head.

From Samarcand to the forests of Siberia the successful Tartar stretched his conquests. Turning from thence, he recrossed the continent to the shores of the Indian Ocean, subduing every intervening kingdom by his resistless arms.

When, ultimately, he became the proud master of this wide domain, he still panted for other and still more illustrious acquisitions. And, being told of the sudden and successful irruptions of the ambitious sultan,—of his designs upon the capital of the Cæsars,—the tale inflamed his envy, and, leaving the banks of the Ganges, he determined to humble his rival in the fields of his triumphs.

His military preparations were made upon a scale suited to the greatness and difficulty of the enterprise; and in due time his victorious army swept over the snow-clad hills of Georgia, and brought, as he intended, the line of his operations in conflict with those of Bajazet.

And now opens the angry and menacing correspondence which issues in the defeat and ruin of the latter. “Thou art no more than a pismire: why wilt thou seek to provoke the elephant? Alas! they will trample thee under their feet,” said the scornful Tamerlane. “If,” replied Bajazet, with a sneer of studied

insolence, "thou hast not courage to meet me in the field, mayest thou again receive thy wives after they have thrice endured the embraces of strangers!"

These were words of offence never to be forgotten by the enraged Mogul. And, alas for Bajazet! it was not his hour. And, as though in derision of his weakness and of his impudent haste, Providence gives him up to defeat and ruin. He is taken prisoner by Tamerlane, put in an iron cage, and made a spectacle to Asia and the world.

The bonds that had so long bound the sultanies had been snapped in the disappearance of the Crusaders. The Turks had broken forth to anticipate the will of Heaven and fulfil before the time their bloody mission; but the strong arm of the Mogul is lifted up from the distant Ganges, and the daring Bajazet is caught like a wild beast escaped from the menagerie, and recaged in the neighbourhood of the doomed capital.

And now, if ever, the fierce Tartar is in the very position to become the proud master of the East and the West. But, strange to relate, in the very vicinity of the empire-city, and at the period and in the very conjuncture most propitious, and still filled with the long-che-

rished desire for the world's subjugation, he most unaccountably turns from the key of power, from the city's protected walls,—and his victorious hordes vanish forever in the distant East.

Both Tamerlane and Bajazet were devout Mohammedans, sympathized with each other in their opposition to an idolatrous church, and alike desired the fall of Greece and Rome. United, two of the best generals of their times, and they at the head of a combined army of twelve hundred thousand men, would have appeared in the field, and not only Constantinople, but exhausted Europe, must have formed at last on her Atlantic slopes the western terminus of the Mohammedan empire.

Such spirits, however, could not unite; and Christendom escaped because the processes of the assigned preparation could not be completed until the time of the end.

Scarcely had this vision of approaching doom vanished, when others became equally appalling and imminent, and imploring cries for aid were spread over the West. But the West had already wasted their best energies in a strife in which they had won and lost a tomb at an incalculable sacrifice.

And neither was the West filled any longer

with bigoted men ready to fly to arms on the first summons. That generation had passed away. The rust had dissolved their armour and death had congealed their blood.

The great schism also, in which three papal bishops claimed each for himself the pontificate, had augmented the general apathy; and, though unity had been restored, in the election of Martin the Fifth, and in his ascension to the chair of St. Peter, A.D. 1417, still, emotions of deep dissatisfaction pervaded the masses. The union was the harmony of electric clouds, exposed at every turn of the wind to an explosion that would scatter them again.

The confederate kingdoms of the West had, many of them, united in earnestly demanding the reformation of the church in its "head and in its members." The Council of Constance, which had assembled for the ostensible purpose of carrying out the popular wish, sent John Huss and Jerome of Prague to the stake, removed from office the three contending popes, and elected Martin the Fifth as their successor. But, alas! this was all: no other reformation occurred. It had been promised; but, still, all the evils complained of continued to reign.

Mutual confidence had been lost; no one could trust another. Social honour and do

mestic happiness had alike disappeared. Justice had wholly forsaken the councils of the church, and, indeed, all the tribunals which were under the reach and rule of the clergy. True piety, outraged and wronged, saw its ablest and purest defenders perish at the stake or vanish in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

The few controlled the many. They were in power; and the popular conscience, without an organization in which it could gain individuality and utterance, broke forth only in its desultory and abortive expostulations.

But still there prevailed everywhere the deep impressions of unredressed grievances, of unatoned wrong; and therefore the power, if even the will had existed, to revive the fanaticism of a previous age once more, had disappeared forever.

A new class of religious teachers and influences were weakening everywhere the bands of Rome. New ideas, in the bosoms of thousands, were beginning to struggle into life and to call for other leaders in church and state of more hopeful and holier sympathies.

An apathy with respect to the perpetual encroachments of the Turks had, in consequence, spread itself over the entire West.

Such was at this time the state of the popu-

lar mind, that Peter the Hermit, had he been reproduced, must have failed to have made any considerable general impression. And if the perfidious Martin, or the corrupt ministers of a communion rendered execrable by its shameless impieties, had attempted to raise an army to defend the altars of the East from the desecration of Islamism, the effort would have been met with an emotion akin to a desire for a change even to the latter as the more hopeful regime.

Popery had become a worn-out harlot, whose shameless effrontery shocked even the common sentiments of natural religion, and on whose withered cheek there was no blush.

When, therefore, Tamerlane left the oppressed sultanies, he left them without an enemy in the field. The tempest from Europe had expended its rage in Asia; the wars of the cross had ended, and the fierce Mogul had become lost to all further thoughts of the world's subjugation. He had slept his last sleep on his way to China. In that sleep he dreamed no more of battles and sieges.

The tendency in the several sultanies after these events was steadily and firmly toward a union of their forces. Having for so many years experienced the evils of dissension, their

leading minds kept ever in view, amid the sharp and bloody debates of the successors of the fallen sultan, the great advantages that would accrue to them on a permanent cessation of all domestic feuds. To the great joy of all, these terminated with the fall of the last pretender to the throne of Bajazet.

From this period, (A.D. 1421,) Providence gave to the Ottomans successful leaders and armies of disciplined and available courage.

Mohammed the Second, son of Amurath, ascended the throne in the twenty-first year of his age. His infant brothers were ruthlessly slain, and the insubordination of the janizaries was taught to respect a master who knew how to revenge an affront and how to direct and exhaust their wild and fierce animosities. Seven thousand useless falconers were turned into citizens or soldiers, and the expenses of a luxurious court made to minister to his ambitious desire,—a desire that fixed and expended itself solely on the conquest of Constantinople.

To this all things else bowed and contributed. The pleasures of his youth were forgotten and absorbed in the workings of a mightier passion. It impelled him in the daytime to extraordinary efforts, and broke his

rest at night. His very clemency was studied. His gifts of gold, titles, or place, alike pointed the soldier to the walls of the coveted city. His very words burned with an enthusiasm which communicated to his army a corresponding emotion, and his whole kingdom resounded with the din of hostile preparations.

About five miles from Constantinople, on the European side of the Bosphorus, he erected a strong castle. The Greeks became alarmed when they saw thus boldly thrown aside even the mask of peace. They ventured to expostulate by their ambassadors. "Return in safety," said the inflexible chief, "but the next who delivers a similar message may expect to be flayed alive."*

* Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 375.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

“Then the mighty pour’d their breath;
Slaughter feasted on the brave:
’Twas the carnival of death;
’Twas the vintage of the grave.”

THE Turks were celebrated—as have ever been the Saracens before them—for their numerous armies of horsemen. These, in previous centuries, had been their sole reliance in war. Reposing in the daytime, their stealthy advance upon the unguarded frontiers of devoted countries was made at night. Its silence was broken by the quick tramp of their panting cavalry. The falling dew cooled the ardour of their blood, and moonlit plains facilitated their approach. Long before the dawn, the shout of battle woke the sleepers to man walls already scaled,—to guard gates already entered by the victors.

While the Crusaders relied on their horses of massive proportions, steel armour, heavy swords, spears, and battle-axes, the Saracen and

Turk had hitherto relied on the use of their sharp scimitars, and on the light-footed, swift steeds of the desert. With them, the onset, the retreat, and the sudden onset again, to be again followed by a retreat and a return to the struggle, were but the ordinary evolutions of the battle-field.

In this sort of warfare they were always superior to the Christians. But, when brought to close quarters, when the horse could not any longer aid their courage, they fell before the stronger arm of steel-clad knights. They were known as warriors formidable in the saddle and in fields suited to the operations of an army of trained horsemen, but as inefficient in hand-to-hand fights.

These armies appeared often incredibly numerous. Frequent attempts were made to estimate the probable numerical force that followed the invader; and at such times, ordinarily, the alarms of fear aided the exaggerations of the fancy. And, while all agreed in stating the number as that of myriads, it was quite impossible to count accurately the scattered and rushing squadrons, for they were seen transiently and at different points on a frontier of many hundred miles.

The estimates ranged usually at from two hundred thousand to six hundred thousand; or, in the language of John, "two hundred thousand thousand,"—a very large, indefinite number, impossible accurately to enumerate, yet oppressing the imagination by the vastness of their supposed destructive capabilities.

But, when Mohammed environed Constantinople and took it, not only the horse, but also the battering-rams of other days, had become quite insignificant in comparison with the newly-discovered engine of destruction employed by the conqueror.

"Von Hammer states that he had himself seen the great cannon of the Dardanelles, in which a tailor who had run away from his creditors had concealed himself several days."* A cannon, it is said, was cast for Mohammed, in which the measure of twelve palms was assigned to the bore, and which propelled a stone bullet of six hundred pounds' weight the distance of a mile, when it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground.†

Anciently, walled towns were not built to resist cannon. The fortifications were considered sufficient if battering-rams would fail to

* Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 380.

† Ibid.

overthrow them. Constantinople could withstand these; but when its walls were struck by the resistless hail that issued from amid the fire and smoke and brimstone of the Turkish batteries, and from an army of two hundred and fifty thousand horse and foot, they rapidly crumbled into breaches impossible to be repaired or defended.

The Turkish horse, as they swept through the villages and subdued the surrounding country to the very gates of the city, were enveloped in a cloud that gave to them an appalling indistinctness.

One unused to such scenes, and not understanding the precise nature of the phenomena, could but say, "Thus I saw the horses in the vision and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone;" (*i.e.* the red, blue, and yellow, in the unique costume of the soldiers composing this strange army.) "And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone."

Forty days the lines of cavalry performed their evolutions, supported the batteries, approached and retired, and incessantly discharged their muskets over the heads of the

horses. It appeared to John that the stream of fire and smoke issued from the infuriated animals themselves. They, with their riders, would for a moment become visible, and seem all the more terrible for the indistinctness with which they were seen and for the incessant volleys that thundered from their extended lines, enwrapping the open plain alternately in sulphureous flames or pitchy darkness.

To the apostle it was not given to know what powder and ball were. It was given him to be a spectator of the novel spectacle, to behold the smoke, fire, and brimstone, and to know that by these were the third part of men killed. What this new source of destruction might be he knew not; but, in prophetic vision, Ishmael was the first who was seen to employ it in battering down the walls of a city; and John saw him rising up in the second woe, enwrapped in clouds of enraged brimstone, which he somehow hurled with terrible effect upon the besieged.

The long rows of black ordnance, looking like large boas, were stretched out at full length on the tops of the numerous batteries. Cannon have been frequently ornamented by the founder with various devices according to his fancy; and that these were made at their

breeches with a coil like a serpent's tail, and at their muzzles in the form of a serpent's head, is not improbable.

One of these, cast by order of the sultan at Adrianople, was of enormous size. Sixty oxen were required for its transportation. It had a fellow on each side of it nearly its equal. One hundred and fifty of these engines of ruin, of different sizes, were reported as stretching their black lengths on each battery; and fourteen of these batteries blazed at once against the tumbling walls. "Their tails," said the prophet, "were like unto serpents', and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

The Turks use a standard surmounted by a crescent and adorned with one or more tails or tufts of hair from the tail of a horse. The number of these tails indicate the number of pachalics under the rule of the chief whose ensign it is, and, of course, his rank and power. Many find in this fact an illustration of the passage respecting the heads and tails with which the hurt was seen to have been done.

The names of the invaders are not given to John. The details are, nevertheless, sufficient. The whole scene appears before him as a transient vision. The third part of men are slain, and he is made to see and to describe the sad

event as it presented itself to him, simply as a spectator.

No actor in the strife knows much about what is occurring at a little distance from him; and, in describing a siege or a battle, you are obliged to collect a number of individual adventures and observations, so as to form a pretty correct picture of the whole by combining and comparing them with one another. This is the office of the historian. But the prophet gives you briefly a correct picture of the general scene, without descending to incidental details beyond what would be necessary to identify the event intended.

John surveys at one view the whole field of strife. He notices the army. It is composed of cavalry; he hears its estimated numbers,—myriads of myriads. He observes the military costume of the Turkish soldiers, in which the colours of red, blue, and yellow predominate. He beholds the smoke, fire, and brimstone enveloping the army,—an unprecedented phenomena; the appearance of the horses, when, at the discharge of musketry over their heads, streams of fire and brimstone seemed to issue from their mouths; and the cannon, with muzzles like serpents' heads and breeches like serpents' tails. With an army and with means

of ruin thus unique, he saw that the third part of men were killed.

Gibbon attributes the loss of the city, at the juncture in which it occurred, to a wound which John Justiniana received from a bullet or an arrow that pierced his gauntlet. He fled in pain and despair from the walls which, up to that moment, he had so bravely defended.

The Latin auxiliaries followed his example. Such pusillanimity at such a time proved fatal. It was perceived by the watchful foe, and the untiring Mohammed flew along his lines,—the angel of death to the fearful, and with the rewards of provinces and of paradise to the courageous and successful soldier who should first mount the breaches.

The Turks redoubled their exertions. Their battle-shout resounded anew amid the roar, the smoke, the blaze, of fourteen hundred cannon and myriads of small-arms. “*La Ilaha illa Alla! Mohammed Resoul Allah!*” “There is but one God! Mohammed is the prophet of God!” The walls are prostrated; the breaches are entered; Constantine, the last of the Cæsars, is slain; and on the twenty-ninth day of May, A.D. 1453, Mohammed, surrounded by his viziers, pachas, and guards, enters the fallen city in triumph. From that hour the capital of the

East became the capital of the Ottoman empire.

The Saracens tormented those that had not the seal of God in their foreheads, but left them in the possession often of their homes, a subdued and a tributary people. The Turks went further,—occupied as proprietors the territories of the Greek church, and divided it among themselves. The Greeks left their homes and fled to the West.

The Turks were prepared to *slay* the third part of men,—to destroy the Greek empire. And from their establishment in Bagdad, A.D. 1063, to the conquest of Constantinople, A.D. 1453, there stretches out just the prophetic interval named by John:—"an hour, a day, a month, and a year," or a fraction over three hundred and ninety-one years,—the exact time assigned to the appointed restraint and preparation. At the consummation of this defined interval, the ruin is complete, and the Empire of the East disappears forever from the map of Europe.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MISSION OF ISHMAEL ONE OF STRIFE.

“He came, he went, like the simoom,—
That harbinger of fate and gloom
Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death.”

BYRON.

WE have now surveyed a period of about eight hundred and fifty years, during which the great disturber and destroyer of the world's peace, and that on a scale most stupendous, has been Ishmael. His hand, since his scattered and isolated tribes gained a great nationality in Mohammed, has been against every man. He has roused the nations to arms in all ages.

His creed opposes him alike to Pagan, Jew, and Christian. His method of propagating it leads him ever to study and practise the art of war. When the religious sentiment is the strongest, his fierce martial spirit is at its height and his enterprises most comprehensive.

His Saracenic conquests involved the world in the strifes of centuries. When his decayed manhood revived again in the sultanies of the

Euphrates, his bloody trumpet for three hundred and ninety-one years startled the remotest tribes and countries. Its challenge brought the Crusaders from Europe in millions, and the vast armies of Saladin from Africa, and finally the mighty host of Tamerlane from the setting sun, to meet him in the field of carnage. During all this interval he was ever the great disturbing influence, breaking forever the whole world's harmonies.

The conquests of Alexander the Great extended over a part of Asia. His progress was that of a courier rather than that of a conqueror. He died at the early age of thirty, without issue to occupy his vacant throne.

The Goths and Vandals conquered Italy, drove the Cæsars to Constantinople, and merged their nationality in that of the Romans. But the wars of Ishmael have been carried into every quarter of the globe; and, while he has absorbed other nationalities, he has never lost his own.

Christian, Jew, or Pagan, were alike the objects of his religious animosities, and their extermination alike grateful to his bloody creed. Others warred from ambition, for revenue, extension of territory, but Ishmael for these as secondary grounds of invasion and conquest.

His prophet and his God invoked his combative spirit into a fiercer life by higher incentives ; spread out before him the fields, the fountains, the gardens, the lovely women, of the upper paradise, to warm the ardour of his blood and to turn him into both a fanatic and a soldier. In him the war-spirit became the nourished offspring of a religious sentiment animated by interest and temperament. Hence it is that the prophecy receives a fulfilment truly wonderful and literal in his history.

Strife is his destiny. He was recently engaged at his accustomed work ; succeeded in drawing into the field of carnage with himself three of the most powerful transatlantic nationalities. The war-cloud that but yesterday hung heavy and dark over the Black Sea was spread by his murderous hand. Those bones that bleach on the bloody heights of Alma, Inkermann, and Sebastopol, were gathered and piled by him.

He sowed discord in the family of the patriarch : God has doomed him to discord ever since. It is his stereotyped character, chronicled in the annals of every age ; and the sad issue is, that it shall be his end. His national being shall perish at last just as it rose :—in a sea of blood.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PROVIDENTIAL WARNING DISREGARDED.

Thy harden'd cheek in wrinkles set
The contrite tear hath never wet;
And darker grows and darker yet
The shadows of the minaret,
Portentous of thy doom.

THE fall of the Empire of the East was Heaven's menace to the West. But, when the warning admonition spread through Christendom, it produced—painful to relate—no reformation.

The Council of Constance had had its gatherings and its deliberations; but its prolonged sittings had been to no good purpose. Other councils were called to reform the church “in its head and in its members,” but equally in vain. The recurrence of such councils was finally prevented by a formal denial of their authority.

The idolatry of the church also remained not only unchanged, but on the increase, in the number of devils, demons, or sainted dead

who were canonized and made objects of religious veneration. Relics were multiplied; holy bones and garments, crucifixes of wood, stone, gold, silver, and brass, rose at every crossing, surmounted every sanctuary, hung upon every bosom; and idolatry became every day more and more visible and intolerable.

The murders committed by Innocent III. on the Albigenses, the awful tortures of the Inquisition, the streams of righteous blood that had been shed, and that had for successive ages purpled the Rhine, the Rhone, and the rivers and fountains of the Ligurian Alps, were still stains of guilt unwashed by the tears of repentance or by the blood of atonement.

When the Council of Constance held its prolonged sittings, it reformed not, it repented not, but lured to its den of deceit and cruelty the pure and zealous Huss, and the eloquent and learned Jerome of Prague. Their true and enlightened piety was adjudged to be their crime. They testified not against the priests as priests, but they testified against them as bad men. Promises of safe conduct were shamelessly violated. They were imprisoned, and finally burned at the stake.

In this council there were no regrets for the past. It destroyed the books of Wicliffe; vio-

lated his resting-place to burn his bones, that it might show every possible indignity to the memory of the just. In the most solemn manner did the emperor, his court and nobles, surrounded by kings and princes, by popes and cardinals, by every centre of influence and responsibility in church and state, in a vast œcumenical council, justify in a formal and solemn declaration, practically and publicly made, the acts of violence, oppression, and murder, which had for ages cried to Heaven for redress.

To warn these guilty generations of the approaching retribution if they repented not, the Eastern estates of the church were subverted, the third part of men slain.

The warning, however, was unheeded. The outrages against Huss and Jerome were followed by persecutions against their numerous followers; and up to the time of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century nothing is more obvious than the continued impenitence and increasing corruptions of the Roman church:—her sorceries or pretended miracles,—her fornications, too gross even for Mohammedan consciences,—her thefts, obtaining money on false pretences by the sale of indulgences,—all continued to be practised and to increase in their

shameless effrontery up to the time of Tetzel's conflict with the indignant Luther.

And even now, with all the light of three hundred years poured upon Europe, her papal kingdoms are still full of darkness; and the whole civilized world has been called with pain to hear of the deification of the Virgin Mary,—to see her made, in the dogmas of Rome, the fourth person in the Godhead.

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.”*

* Rev. ix. 20.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE REFORMATION.

“A hundred years hence ye shall render an account of your doings to God and to me.”—JOHN HUSS *before his judges.*

WHEN Jesus ascended to heaven a bright cloud received him out of sight. In the vision of John* which immediately followed that of the second woe, he reappears, surrounding himself with the tokens of a departed deluge. The bow is painted on the cloud in which he is clothed, and by which we are assured that, whatever alternations in the future might occur, yet the church should not again be surrounded and overwhelmed by the flood of a universal ungodliness.

In the great apostasies which had succeeded the joyous progress of a primitive Christianity, the world had lost its balance. Its vast reservoirs of depravity had emptied their basins, and the ruined hulk had floated on for ages in

* Rev. x. 1.

its starless and desolate track. But the intimations now are, in this new vision, that it is turning back again on its own axis, and that it should never fall in a similarly disastrous manner from its zone.

The bow on the cloud is the symbol of a receding flood. The angel's face also is like the sun rising on the ark on the morning of that day in which it was opened. The mists of the mediæval night were vanishing, and the green and joyous earth was seen rising once more above the loosened fountains of the great deep. The open book in his mighty hand, it is intimated also, could not be closed again a second time as it had been, upborne as it was by such a hand, and that, too, amid the luminous and irresistible outgoings of his mighty providence on land and sea. If the land should prove less favourable where his left foot less firmly and less favourably rested, then the sea should prove more propitious to the exodus of his flying people into a better land.

In this manner is introduced to us the next great series of events occasioned by the conquests of Ishmael,—viz.: the dispersion of the expatriated Greeks over the kingdoms of the West, and the consequent spread and popularity of the language in which the Scriptures

were written and from which they were to be translated, the discovery of the art of printing and of a new continent, and the exodus of the church, together with the death and resurrection of the witnesses,—events that culminate at the disappearance of the second woe. At the close of the prophet's narrative respecting these, it is said, without any other regard to time and manner as to the occurrence, and just as though it had been simply incidental, "The second woe is past."

So the husbandman, annoyed by the marsh spreading its stagnant basins for leagues around, sees on a sudden the lake that feeds it escape from the hill and rush to the sea. The headlong plunge of that resistless torrent completely rivets his attention. He does not observe that, at the same time, the pestilential marsh has also been drained. He sees the lake dried up, the torrent shrunk to a little rivulet, creeping silently along in the bottom of the torn channel, and finally discovers also, and with gratitude, that the spongy soil of the marsh has become arable land.

In like manner the attention of the disciple is perfectly absorbed by the amazing scenes that were passing before him. The vision of the angel with an open book, of the witnesses

and their fortunes, of the fall of the tenth part of the city,—these obliterate for the time the recollections of the past and turn off his eye from contemporaneous occurrences. But, when he recovers his self-possession, he perceives also that these mighty changes have borne away the second woe, and he exclaims, “The second woe is past.”

In order, therefore, to reach the event,—viz. : this disappearance of the second woe,*—it will be necessary to follow in the track of the prophet through the causes that immediately precede and produce it.

The great Reformation of the sixteenth century is one of these. It influences, finally and fatally, the destiny of the second woe; while, at the same time, its origin is in the second woe as one of its remote causes, and its best successes were secured by the indirect aid of the worst forms of that woe:—

“It was commanded [the Saracens] that they should not hurt the grass of the field, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men that have not the seal of God in their foreheads.” While the injuries inflicted were not to fall on Zion, they were to fall on

* The fall of the Ottoman empire.

her foes,—were to employ and absorb their destructive energies, to suspend and confound their cruel policies. Zion, in the mean time, was to escape,—was to be the spectator of a conflict in which the wild beasts had left the prey to devour each other.

This in a good degree proved true also with respect to the Ottomans. The barbarous lords of the Eastern capital despised the culture of its educated sons, desecrated their altars, and buried their hopes in the tomb in which they had buried the last of the Cæsars

The consequent dispersion of the Greeks became a great event of those times. The weeping exiles spread themselves through Europe. Their superior refinement and ruined fortunes awakened universal sympathy. Their elegant manners were imitated, their language studied, and their shining and solid attainments placed them at the head of Western universities and awakened the emulation of the Latins. New ideas expanded the soul, and unaccustomed voices broke the slumber of ages.

Among the patrons of learning, the church of Rome at this time was most conspicuous. By her learned Erasmus was the Greek text purified and prepared for the use of her Protestant foes; by her treasures were teachers

sustained and institutions endowed; and by her hand, all unconscious of the tendency of her own acts, was the dark pall lifted from the sun. Its glance was day; the revelations appalling.

Alarmed at the outcry from the exposure of her sores and her sorceries, she from that hour sought to hide her shame in the covert of her gloomy den. The fruitful source of religious error and of political anarchy was all at once discovered by her to have been in the revival of letters and in the spread of free opinions. She therefore addressed herself with energy to the work of reversing the alarming tendency; but in vain. The dike was broken, the sea was let loose, and its irresistible surges went where she would not.

The extreme depravity of the popes, cardinals, and religious orders, served also to strengthen the tendencies toward the Reformation. A good cause cannot but suffer from the evil conduct of its advocates, since the masses are superficial, and judge a system rather by its fruits than by its principles. But when, while impiety and immorality is most rife and most unblushing in the church, her very principles are themselves assailed by the wisest and the purest citizens, and held to be the fruitful

sources of "murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts," the long-cherished feeling of veneration could not but give place to that of distrust and abhorrence. Her continued impenitence aided more than all other causes put together to quicken the insulted consciences of the people, and to awaken their confidence in the proffered aid of a holier ministration.

Our religious prejudices are extremely stern and sensitive. And when Rome trifled with these, broke her promises, and continued in sin, she isolated herself more than ever from popular sympathies. The ties of her power were loosened and fell off at every stride she took in the opposite direction.

Oppression served but to aggravate the rising animosity. Books might be burned, and bold spirits pay for their temerity with their lives; but the spirit of reform could not be allayed by this course. It was already a living sentiment in the minds of thousands. It rose stern and inflexible, and made some great change imminent and inevitable.

But Rome was never more conscious of safety. She rode a sea whose agitated surface concealed the strength and the depth of the wave that convulsed underneath. Repentance would have awakened confidence; but, with a

fatal disregard to her character for purity as the source of her influence, she threw off the last reserves of decency, and assailed in here and there a popular leader, every day renewedly, some one of the great and favourite ideas of the people. It was a policy most suicidal. The fall of every fresh victim offended more deeply than ever the enlightened consciences of men, and served but to prepare them for the testimony of the true witnesses whenever the sacred volume should at length be fully opened in the vulgar tongue.

The cruelties of Rome tended also in the same direction. There is in providence a just resentment, often marked and palpable even in this life, against great social wrongs, and especially against those of murder. And not the less sure and terrible are its reprisals, even though the murder be committed under the forms of law, in the holy name of religion, and on the plea of a social or a moral necessity.

The blood of Huss cried from the ground. Armies sprang into being at that cry to avenge his death; and the seeds of the great Reformation were quickened into a more vigorous germination by the ashes of the martyr. The interference of the Bohemian nobles was all

emotional, all uncalculating. It was indeed but the first excited throb of a sympathetic humanity,—nevertheless most certain to settle down ultimately into purposes of deliberate and organized retaliation.

“Ye have put him to a cruel and an ignominious death,” said they, “though convicted of no heresy. . . . Ye have also unmercifully imprisoned, and perhaps already put to death, Jerome of Prague,—a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also ye have condemned unconvicted. . . . We are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defence of the gospel of Christ and of his faithful preachers.” Such was the stern remonstrance of the indignant nobles; and for thirteen years Bohemia terribly avenged her martyrs in the Hussite war.

It was in after-ages urged that the safe-conduct granted to Luther ought not to be regarded:—“that the Rhine should receive his ashes, as it had received those of Huss a century ago.” But the proposition was regarded by the Elector of Saxony with an emotion of horror. “It,” said he, “has brought too many misfortunes on the German nation for us ever to raise such a scaffold the second time.”

That scaffold is an imperishable chronicle in the annals of time. Even the cry of the furious bishops, when Huss refused to recant, still rings in our ears and enrages our blood. “‘He is a malicious and hardened heretic! Down, down from the platform!’ With a black and weighty chain around his neck, he was fastened to the stake. . . . The wood having been consumed, the corpse continued suspended on the stake; and the executioners, having brought an additional quantity of fuel, thrust both stake and corpse anew into the fire, which consumed the whole. . . . The Papists dug out the hole for a considerable space around, conveyed away the earth and ashes in carts, and cast the whole into the Rhine.”*

“The blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the church.” She has fallen in one country but to rise in another; and over that “plat”† where she fell God has ever emptied a vial and spread a troubled cloud. On that cloud the Elector had fixed his anxious gaze. It still hung there, (so it seemed to him,) skirted with fire and drip-

* “History of the Waldenses,” vol. ii. pp. 24, 25

† 2 Kings ix. 26.

ping with intense wrath, over the stake of Huss. The calamities of a century had not made expiation; and he would not for the wealth of an empire see Germany “raise such a scaffold a second time.”

The bleeding remnant of the Albigenses also found their way into all the countries of Europe. Their persecutors, though they had driven them from their native valleys, had to meet them again in the Wicliffites, the Hussites, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, of after-times. Such are the laws of Providence. But still the church could never have succeeded to any considerable extent in the peaceful utterance of her blessed testimony without the discovery of some new world, in which she might have an unobstructed growth, and some new appliance which, like the inspiration of the primitive age, would reproduce the word, despite every effort to destroy it.

When inspiration ceased, the early church, having but little access to the pure word of God, dwindled amid surrounding corruptions and oppressions, and at the end of the third century was thought to have been almost extinct. From that period to the beginning of the sixteenth century it steadily declined, and has often been on the very verge of ruin.

Asia, Africa, Europe, were all lost to her in the total apostasy of her professed friends; and the small remnant of her desolate children wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins in the fastnesses of inaccessible mountains and in the solitudes of wildernesses, prolonging a precarious and an afflicted life amid all uncertainties and all sufferings.

The causes that tended toward the great Reformation and that urged it forward, excepting those yet to be named, had all existed in previous ages, under equally favourable circumstances; and all had proved abortive. Charles, when he regretted that he had not slain Luther at Worms, and thus had strangled the Reformation in its cradle, judged incorrectly of the influence of that event; because this reformation, unlike any other since the time of the apostles, connected itself with the art of printing and with the discovery of a new continent. These gave to the church a vantage-ground which Providence had never given her before: these will require, therefore, a particular review.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ART OF PRINTING AND THE REFORMATION.

“That church, o’erborne, depress’d, unpeopled, dead,
Oft from the dust of ruin raised its head.”

MONTGOMERY.

IN God’s economy, a knowledge of the gospel is made essential to salvation. Men cannot see without light; nor can they believe in Christ without a knowledge of the word which reveals him. “How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” As the languages in which the Scriptures were written ceased to be spoken, the call for a translation of them into the vulgar tongue became imperative. Translations, however, required great labour and great erudition. A copy of the Bible, fully written out, would require ten months of close application; and such a copy would cost the yearly stipend of a curate. A few verses, chapters, or sometimes one or more of the epistles, were translated, and were sparsely circulated. They were possessed by but few; and but a very small num-

ber of persons in the whole world knew of the existence of any other Scriptures than these.

Luther, at the age of twenty, had never seen or heard of a Bible. His discovery of it finally was the result of mere curiosity. In examining the title-pages of old volumes in the library at Erfurth, he lighted upon the sacred manuscript for the first time; and from this circumstance we may conclude that at that time, and for all great practical ends, the Bible had become wholly lost to the world. It was buried in a dead language, in caverns in the interior of Asia, in the solitary cells of convents, or on the remote shelves of public institutions. Most of those who had access to it could not read it; and hence God's chosen instrumentality, made indispensable to man's salvation, had been taken away, and the blessed day-spring was hid from human eyes.

But the Scriptures might have been restored,—might have been given to the people,—had not the whole world's nominal Christianity resisted the attempt,—and that in all places and for ages. When the nations were angry and closed the blessed book by violence, it indeed required an angel's mighty hand to open and to restore it.

In A.D. 1229 the translations of the Albi-

genses were condemned and cast into the flames. These afflicted disciples sought to repair their infinite loss by committing the Scriptures to memory; and among the inhabitants of the valleys this became common. Societies among the young were formed for this purpose, and to each member was intrusted a portion of the word of God, which it was required of him to commit and recite perfectly.

A candidate for the ministry in those times was not sufficiently qualified to preach the gospel while as yet he remained unable to recite all the books of both Testaments from memory. The monks, the doctors of the Sorbonne, St. Bernard, and Reinerius the Inquisitor, take special notice of the astonishing familiarity of the Albigeois with the Scriptures, and attribute their vast superiority in debate to this cause.

Wicliffe's translation, made one hundred years before the art of printing was discovered, was violently suppressed. Any person who possessed any portion of Wicliffe's English version was condemned to the stake; and many suffered martyrdom for no other reason. And, though the true church survived in England and in many other places,

yet she barely survived. In the twelfth century Innocent III., by the tortures of the Inquisition and by vast and merciless armies, had well-nigh destroyed the last remnant of God's elect; and, but for the wars of the cross in Asia at the time, the fearful consummation might have been reached.

No loss to the church was ever so calamitous as the loss of the Bible. When the Greek language was generally spoken, the divine withdrawal of inspired teachers was accompanied with the substitution of the inspired word, which occupied their places and afforded to all its sufficient supply of saving light; but when that language ceased to be spoken the church perished over whole countries. She lost the Word, and with it expired her vitality. No course, then, when the object was her total extinction, could have been pursued that promised to be more fatally successful than to deprive her of her Bible. It was a policy well understood by her enemies, and for three hundred years most rigorously carried out.

From the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, but here and there a copy escaped, either in England or on the continent, the espionage of those in the interests or in the pay of Rome.

Not only the great centres of the world's gathered life, but rural districts, mountain-gorges, and remote villages, were alike under the argus gaze of the ever-watchful Antichrist. And when the least indications of reviving piety became visible, and the precious volume began to distribute its healing leaves, the Inquisitor was at once abroad, and the dungeon and the stake proved but all too effective.

The true church seemed to lose ultimately, in rivers of blood and in the despairing and secret flight of the remnant of her children, all that she had ever gained. The dead told no tales. Her very history vanished in the flames that consumed her martyrs. It is now gathered mainly from the notes of Inquisitors. Rome in all these conflicts was ever triumphant, and ever pointed her monitory finger from the eternal hills to the dungeon, to the rack, to whole regions blackened by the flames she had kindled and strewed with the whitened bones of the godly, and cried to the scattered remnant, "Who comes this way, let him behold and fear to sin!"

Such had ever been the result until the commencement of the sixteenth century. The church survived; but it was amid the solitudes of deserts or in uninhabitable mountains. In

these wild coverts of the tiger and the wolf she sat in sackcloth, now singing her hymn of praise, now surprised by the Dragoon that hunted her life, and now bowing her head in her spirit's desolation.

And, but for the discovery of the art of printing, the Reformation of the sixteenth century must have shared the fate of those that had preceded it. "Oh!" exclaimed Tyndale, "while I am sowing in one place they ravage the field I have just left. I cannot be everywhere. If Christians had the Scriptures in their own tongue, they could themselves withstand these sophists. Without the Bible, it is impossible to establish the laity in the truth."

Twenty-two years after the martyrdom of Huss, while Rome was meditating a subjugation of the Greek church to the sovereign pontiff, Laurentius Custos was engaged, in the neighbourhood of Harlem, in cutting his name in raised letters on the bark of a birch-tree. He amused himself by reproducing copies, at his pleasure, with these rude types, and finally began to print on a larger scale. While perfecting his newly-discovered art, his servant (he relates) stole his types and tools and fled to Mentz.

In the latter place, in A.D. 1442, a company of printers, aided by John Faustus, a wealthy citizen, began to print with wooden and afterward with metallic types. It is said that the first book they printed was a Bible, and that they completed the task in eight years. The company kept their art a profound secret. They were mutually bound, under oath, not to reveal their great and lucrative discovery. But, in A.D. 1468, Mentz was stormed and sacked by Adolphus, Archbishop of Nassau, and, the printers having fled into different countries, each set up for himself a printing-establishment. The art ceased any longer to be a secret. In 1530, when Tyndale and Luther were issuing their Bibles, there were two hundred presses in operation in Europe.

The first translation of the Scriptures into English, directly from the original, was made by William Tyndale: (that made by Wicliffe was translated from the Latin.) Tyndale rose in England simultaneously with Luther in Germany. Unable to proceed with his great work at home, he in 1524 visited Luther, and in less than two years succeeded in printing three thousand copies of his version. Shortly after numerous copies reached

England, and were diligently though secretly circulated.

Bishop Tonstall condemned "this most pestiferous and most pernicious poison of Tyn-dale," and prohibited its use. Many of the people were imprisoned and many of the books publicly burned. But the destruction of the copies in England encouraged the Dutch to resupply a market in which they were in such demand. Their sales were rapid and their profits enormous. Tonstall, to arrest the evil in its source, went to Antwerp and bought up all the copies he could obtain. These were all committed to the flames in St. Paul's churchyard by the zealous bishop. He was not aware that printing was such a prolific source of reproduction, and was amazed that the Dutch had another edition, shortly after, ready for the English market, desiring to sell the books, not caring whether they were read or burned.

Archbishop Warham also assembled a convention, (A.D. 1530,) and sought to close the open book. The good people were called upon "to detest and abhor the New Testament printed in English," and to deliver up all the copies in their possession to the proper authorities. Ah me! how many in that day gave

liberty and life itself away in their zeal for the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures! “To see,” says Fox, “their travails, their earnest seeking, their burning zeal, their readings, their watchings, their secret assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living, their faithful marrying with the faithful, may make us now, in these our days of free profession, to blush for shame.”

Tyndale’s Bible survived the martyr. He, while prosecuting with ardour his great work, was arrested at Antwerp and strangled for the crime of heresy. His last prayer was for his country, and especially that the Lord would open the eyes of the king of England. In that same year Henry gave the Bible to the people.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ART OF PRINTING AND THE REFORMATION.

“Howl, winds of night! your force combine :
Without His high behest
Ye shall not, in the mountain-pine,
Disturb the sparrow’s nest.”

KIRKE WHITE.

WE now turn to Germany, not for the purpose of following up the thrilling history of Luther, not to survey the colossal proportions of his massive intellect, not to observe his courage amid perils, his hairbreadth escapes, his triumphs over Dr. Eck, Cardinal Cajetan, and the learned Erasmus, but to look in upon him in his prison at the Wartburg, in which, because he has nothing now to excite and employ his active mind and to turn him off from his great work, he finishes the translation of the New Testament into the German.

This, to use his own sententious words, was to bring forth “the sun whence all teachers receive their light.” This, the greatest and most effective of all the works of the illus-

trious Reformer, was finished in the summer of 1521. Before Tyndale and Luther knew each other, the same blessed Spirit had employed them both, in different countries and in different languages, in the consummation of the same difficult and momentous task. Shortly after, they met at Antwerp, and their versions were issued very nearly at the same time.

But for this,—but for the numerous copies of the living word put in circulation by the Reformers,—like Waldo, Wicliffe, and Huss, they also and their works would have perished with their own living age. But, when the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue became the basis of the Reformation, the Reformation itself, despite an occasional winter, became perennial as the verdure which returning spring ever renews and freshens on the martyr's grave.

The book thus opened in Germany led the alarmed enemies of reform to insist renewedly and peremptorily on the execution of the sentence against Luther and his Bible. “I say,” said the Papal legate to the Diet at Nuremberg, “on this point as I do of the rest. The sentences of the pope and the emperor ought to be implicitly obeyed; the books should be

burned, and the printers and vendors of them duly punished. There is no other way to suppress and extinguish this pernicious sect. It is from the reading of their books that all these evils have arisen.”* “The flames of their treason,” says Pallavicini, “are not to be extinguished by concessions, but quenched by showers of blood.”†

George, Duke of Saxony, armed with Inquisitorial and Papal authority, sought to carry out these cruel policies, and for this purpose purchased and destroyed all the copies of the Testament in German he could obtain, severely punishing at the same time those of his subjects who refused to deliver them up. His kingdom resounded with anathemas against the Reformers, falling in bitterness from priestly lips, and with the uproar of persecution.

But the press astonished and confounded the foes of truth. It restored the lost copies of the inspired word, and oppression roused an interest that gentleness would have left dormant. The Bible was sought out and read among all classes with unprecedented avidity, and what the living teacher, without it, was unable to do, the word did for him:—It in ten

* Millner, chap. xvi.

† Ibid.

thousand dwellings became a burning and an inextinguishable light, whether that teacher were abroad or whether he slept in the prison or the grave. "It is not I, I repeat it, it is the divine word, which has done every thing."*

In the days of the apostles, the inspiration of numerous teachers gave the church her vantage-ground. Her ministry was a living word,—an epistle read of all. But when uninspired men succeeded to them, and the book which they left behind became itself sealed up in the silence and darkness of a dead language, the teachers which appealed to it as umpire in every debated point openly admitted their own liability to err, and sunk at once out of sight as ultimate authority whenever that book was referred to. Not so the Papal ecclesiastic. He claimed infallibility for his church, and for himself, as the authorized and ultimate interpreter of its faith.

The Protestant, following the impulses of a better age, exalted against the infallibility of the church the infallibility of the evangelists, and against the infallibility of the priest the infallibility of the Holy Spirit. The rage of

* Millner, ch. xvi.

Rome, therefore, at this time fell most severely upon the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, and on what was termed by them "private interpretation." The issue was in reality between the open Bible in the angel's hand and Rome. And the conflict that now arose became one of new, peculiar, and of overmastering difficulty.

Before the art of printing was discovered, the dungeon and the fagot in a few short years laid the rising Reformation low; now the living teacher might perish from among men, but Bibles and Testaments fell like the dew, silently and secretly, in multiplied editions and copies, everywhere. They were on the departed Inquisitor's track while yet it was warm; or, while he snatched the copy from the shelf of the peasant and cast it into the fire, its fellow slept securely under the hearthstone. When the living teacher fell, his eloquent appeals were cut short forever. The mighty champion had but one life, and one blow ended it. But, when he added the press to the pulpit, he reproduced himself in ten thousand lives; depositing these in the safe-keeping of numerous individuals, families, and kingdoms.

We may well smile in this day at the Pope's bull against Bible societies. Will he spread

his scarlet robe on the broad mountains and absorb all the dews of heaven in its tiny folds? Will he put up his little palm and expect to quench in it the light of day? O thou impotent and impious one! "God shall destroy thee. He shall take thee away. He shall pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous also shall see and shall fear and shall laugh at him. Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but strengthened himself in his wickedness."

Papal infallibility resolves itself ultimately into the infallibility of every individual member of its priesthood. It was an after-thought, the result of a peculiar necessity. Perplexed individuals were required to go to them, and not to depend upon the guidance of their own erring minds.

"The sacred writings," said Erasmus, "are an abyss in whose depths even the most learned men have often been lost. . . . The Scriptures are committed to the learned, and to them only." Such were the assumptions which were, in the new circumstances of the contending parties, resorted to to close again the now open book. Since it could not be destroyed by fire, it might be by construction. If its in-

terpretation must ever be derived from the priesthood, Rome would, after all her fears, lose nothing by a translation. The Bible would be quite as effectually sealed in such an event as though it still had slept in the unbroken repose of an unknown tongue.

It was, however, opened as an authoritative record in two respects. In the first it was opened in a translation; in the second, to the understandings of men by the Holy Spirit. The author of the Bible should understand his own meaning best, and had promised illumination to the sincere suppliant. "The sacred writings are not to be understood but by that Spirit with which they were written; which Spirit is never felt to be more powerful and energetic than when he attends the serious perusal of the writings which he himself dictated."*

The alternative presented thus by the Protestant was not that of a selection of a Papal or a Protestant for a guide. The latter abandoned, at once and forever, the awful arena into which he had been challenged by his Papal antagonist, and elevated in his place the Holy Spirit, to take charge of the per-

* Millner, vol. ii. p. 286.

plexities of every mind, and to open the meaning of His own word to every humble and earnest inquirer after truth.

“However blameless a life I might lead as a monk,” said Luther, “I experienced a most unquiet conscience. I perceived myself a sinner before God. I saw that I could do nothing to appease him, and I hated the idea of a just God that punished sinners. I was well versed in all St. Paul’s writings, and, in particular, I had a most wonderful desire to understand the Epistle to the Romans. But I was puzzled with the expression, ‘Therein is the righteousness of God revealed.’ My heart rose almost against God with a silent sort of blasphemy. . . . Over and over I turned the above-mentioned passage to the Romans most importunately. My thirst to know the apostle’s meaning was insatiable.

“At length, while I was meditating day and night on the words and their connection with what immediately follows,—namely, ‘The just shall live by faith,’—it pleased God to have pity upon me, to open my eyes and to show me that ‘the righteousness of God,’ which is here said in the gospel to be revealed from faith to faith, relates to the method by which God in his mercy justifies a sinner

through faith. . . . Hence I felt myself a new man, and all the Scriptures appeared to have a new face. . . . This very passage of St. Paul proved to me the entrance into paradise.”*

The Waldenses, the Wicliffites, the Hussites, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the true church in every age, from the earliest times, obtained her light from above, and sought not an infallible but a converted ministry, whose understandings Jesus had opened that they should understand the Scriptures. In determining whether teachers were true or false, how did the church “sift their private spirit, whether they had experienced any internal distress of soul, the attacks of death and hell, and the comforts of the new birth unto righteousness”! “If,” runs the instructions, “you hear nothing from them but smooth, tranquil, and, forsooth, what they call devout, religious contemplations, regard them not.”†

The opening of the Scriptures in a translation made them accessible to the people. But they saw not to the end of that which was abolished. The same veil that blinded the Jew obscured the vision of the Gentile. He

* Millner, vol. ii. p. 232.

† Ibid. p. 342.

too stood before the burning mount, and, though he had heard of Jesus, yet to him also, until divinely enlightened, his Lord remained entombed underneath the ministration of death.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was a revival of spiritual life in the kingdoms of the West. This was the mainspring of its power; and by it the translated Scriptures became a lamp to the feet and a light to the path of lost nations. Omit this most essential part of the vision, and God's great work is effectually hid from our eyes.

The well-known symbol of a Papal church is a cross. It is the universal sign of her faith, whether made by the printer, the goldsmith or carpenter, whether stamped on a book, or worn on the breast, or elevated on the tops of churches. But it is not a more universal badge of Romanism than is an open Bible that of Protestantism.

The Bible was never opened to any considerable extent, as we have seen, until it assumed the form of a printed book. And, as the effort to close it again and the effort to keep it open has made it the centre of debate among civilized nations for three centuries, it has become, providentially, the well-known

sign of the Protestant religion. The printer, the carpenter, and the gilder, are alike employed to supply the recognised symbol of a Protestant Christianity by those who would represent a Reformer or a modern clergyman, or characterize a book by a sign on its cover, or a Bible society by a sign at its door.

From the time in which in England the Bible was fastened to a desk in the centre of a library for public use, because the demand exceeded the supply, until this day, when it is offered gratuitously to all, it has ever been the striking and significant emblem of our Protestant faith. And while Rome continues to elevate her cross and to condemn the Bible to the flames, so long will the picture of an open book in the hand of an angel, or in the hand of a martyr or a minister, distinguish the friends of the Bible from its foes and point them out as the irreconcilable enemies of darkness and of Rome.

And who can fail to see, in that halo round about the head of the cloud-robed angel* of the Reformation, the token of mercy? It is here at this point in earth's sad history,—on this Ararat where the ark finally rested,—

* Revelation x. 1.

that we look out on plats of living verdure which here and there dot the desolate expanse, and which are seen amid the remaining and angry surges of the receding flood. And while the mournful experience of the past fills us with anxiety for the future, the bow is seen in the cloud, and the face of the angel that holds the little book in his right hand shines through the tears of a tempest now passing away. And we assuredly gather, from that emblem, that that blessed book shall not be again closed, until the heavens themselves shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth with the things that are therein shall be burned up.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA, AND THE REFORMATION.

Thy foot hath left upon the sea
A glimmering path to guide our flight;
But where proud Rome pursues our way
It turns the day-spring into night.

THE right foot of the angel of the great Reformation was in the sea. His most auspicious outgoings were to be in connection with its turbulent waves. Thus is it intimated that a pillar of fire, to guide the church amid many dark and disastrous providences, should cast its light across the ocean and invite her persecuted children to seek an asylum on the shores of a distant continent.

Two short years after the storming of Mentz and the consequent dispersion of its secret conclave of printers, the same Providence which had in this wonderful manner originated printing-presses simultaneously in the different countries of Europe brought to Lisbon the

son of a wool-comber,—a youth of most remarkable genius and invention, and who, obtaining the command of vessels for the purpose, undertook the discovery of an unknown coast.

In A.D. 1492, Columbus reached the West Indies, and shortly after the Western continent became known to Europe. Numerous adventurers hastened to its shores in successive voyages and in a fruitless quest of wealth and dominion. The mariner's compass and the art of ship-building and navigation, however, became by these means gradually perfected, and the great end of Providence, in its mighty footprint in the sea, came in a few short years to be realized.

Hitherto the emigration of nomadic tribes, the wanderings of the persecuted, or the travels of merchants, had been by land. A few islands dotting the Atlantic coast of Europe had been reached; the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the British Channel, and a few other inland basins, had been coasted and crossed; but these were short voyages, made long before by the Egyptians, the Phenicians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, and the Romans, and their repetition could make no new or considerable impressions on the fortunes of the race,—could

not be referred to as forming a grand epoch in the world's eventful history, and be consistently represented by the descent of an angel from heaven throwing with his right foot, and for the first time since the days of John, a luminous track across the sea.

But when America was discovered,—when the Western continent opened its bosom to the refugees from the Old World and threw a wide ocean between them and their oppressors,—this became a great event, and must in all time be chronicled as such. There originated then, on that far-off and protected coast, a mighty nationality under the sway of the little book in the angel's hand. Thousands, finding that they could not enjoy its chartered rights and walk by its laws of salvation under the frowning battlements of Rome, to escape the stake and win their freedom fled to the sea, to join the new commonwealth opening its gates toward the setting of the sun.

It was in this manner that its most desirable acquisitions were made. Persecution in the Old World drove successive companies of weeping disciples into the sea to form and to defend the Western states. It, more than all other causes put together, originated the great Republic.

The ashes of Huss found their way to the sea. Those of Wicliffe were thrown into the Swift. "It," says Fuller, "conveyed them into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wicliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

Into that sea, which shall yet yield up its tears and its dead, the angel placed his foot. There were the outgoings of his most illustrious providences; there was the bow of promise round about his head; and, though painted on a nebula of tears, it assured the pilgrim that the storm had passed away.

The early settlements of interested adventurers in the New World, in pursuit of gold and gems, ended in disappointment and disaster. The ruins of colonial villages, and the bones that were strewed upon the clearings of the wilderness, startled and discouraged those that succeeded such unfortunate pioneers. They looked in terror upon the ashes of their huts and the trail of blood where the plough stood in the half-finished furrow of the corn-field, and turned away in despair.

But, when the persecuted fled successively to the sea on a religious account, the settle-

ments became permanent, and grew ultimately into flourishing states. Their ships were piloted by an unseen intelligence, and landed their precious freights at the most desirable points. Toward them the angel ever turned his bright face and the bright side of the effulgent pillar.

Their favoured emigrations stand ever in striking contrast with those of a pursuing Rome. From her unblessed and sinister track the face of the angel was ever averted; and the dark side of the fiery pillar cast a cheerless shadow over her missions and fortunes.

Every step with her has proved a mistake. Her earlier and most numerous converts in the New World were its aborigines,—a fated race, that have already descended into the tomb opened for them by the hand of a higher and a holier civilization.

Her conquests also in South America and the West Indies are now within the eddies of a mightier and a more absorbing attraction; and her immigrant millions, scattered through the North, surrounded by the nobler manhood and superior intelligence of Protestant communities, have failed to close the little book in the angel's hand, or even to preserve themselves from its mysterious sway.

Hers is a failing struggle. And it is obviously the destiny of the swaggering and wrinkled harlot to waste away and perish amid institutions and influences whose powers of assimilation are steady, expansive, and irresistible. While in Europe, during the same period, she has won back most of her lost territory and power, in America she mourns the loss of most of her treasures and her children.

The future of this goodly land is also full of hopeful intimations. The nature and necessary tendency of the mighty causes which now already exist seem destined to make the new continent the perpetual home of a vast and a happy Protestant nationality. The delightful experience of the past, and the bow of promise encircling the angel's brow with its halo of attractive benignity, assure us that those pilgrims who fled to the sea took the propitious track, reached the summit of safety where the ark rested, and from the tops of their Alleghanies we look back over perilous and assuaged deeps, and recount on the historic page the devastations of a deluge whose angry surges can never reach us more.

CHAPTER XXX.

ISLAMISM AND THE REFORMATION.

“The ocean eagle soar’d
From his nest by the white waves’ foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roar’d:
This was their welcome home!”

WE now turn from the sea,—that striking emblem of the church, of her unsettled and changeful state, of her stormy doom, of the crude and troubled elements out of which she was to construct for herself her home in the New World,—to the land where society still continued to repose in the midst of mediæval dynasties, and, as the normal law of its safety, undesirous and resistful of change.

Well might the angel place his *left* foot on a spot so unpropitious, where improvement would be sure to be opposed, and new though right opinions be made treason against princes and impiety in the church.

In the New World the church found all

social circumstances appropriate or controllable, and ultimately congenial. She had but to rise there upon the broad and sufficient foundation of her open book and her blessed testimony. She had no one there to spy out her liberty, or embarrass or retard the natural outworkings of her inward life.

But, in the Old, both church and state fell back on the iron forms of past mistakes; and long-cherished errors, hallowed by time and endorsed by custom, yielded slowly, reluctantly, and often but partially, to the progress of the Reformation. Yea, many of the Reformers needed themselves to be reformed,—needed all the treason, cruelty, and persecution that pursued them to prevent their fatal concessions to Rome, or, perhaps, their return to her bosom.

Leo's bull, and the harsh treatment received by Luther at Worms, proved a blessing. It insulted his generous though impulsive nature, and awakened an opposition which a more gentle course might have modified or neutralized. And yet, with all that tended to isolate and freely develop the church, Geneva, the British Islands, and Holland, became finally the prominent centres of a reformation that had halted sadly in other places.

Luther could scarcely ever be himself. Erasmus, at the first, preached to him moderation. Melancthon also, and the Protestant princes, were ever ready to instruct his caution and to restrain the free outworkings of his evangelical spirit. With a nature so impressible and social, and ever listening to the counsels of the worldly-wise or the spiritually timid, it is truly wonderful that he at length broke through so many restraints and put so wide a separation between himself and Rome.

Zuingle, Calvin, and Knox, were farther from the focus of such influences; and the church under their auspices became more thoroughly reformed, rose to a purer evangelism. But in no country did she rise as she did when the ocean rolled between her and the Old World.

The struggles of the non-conformists and the recent exodus of the Free Church of Scotland are examples which show the tendency of the church toward a more scriptural form and a freer ecclesiasticism than she had ever attained under her transatlantic surroundings.

The Protestantism of Germany also, unlike that of the United States, trembled often on the very verge of ruin, and gained at last for herself a precarious footing, not by a natural

development of her own principles and power, but by a wonderful intervention,* temporary in its influence, whose aid was an indirection of Providence, and which, having subserved its purpose, would pass away.

Thus, in A.D. 1530, while yet in its infancy, it was well-nigh strangled in its cradle. Papal and imperial foes, having united, had taken the initiatory steps for its destruction. The princes, states, and cities which had thrown off the papal yoke were required instantly to return to their duty and to their allegiance to the sovereign pontiff, on pain of imperial and papal displeasure. And, but for the sudden appearance of Solyman in great force thundering at the gates of the empire, the Protestant cause, in Germany at least, must have been ruined. It had been resolved that "the flames of its treason could not be extinguished by concessions: it could be quenched only by showers of blood."

In the United States it sprang up peacefully, as plants spring up under genial skies. In Germany it survived an impending ruin only amid the terrors of invasion and the storms of war.

* Invasions by the Turks.

Mosheim, in accounting for the establishment of Protestantism, shows it to have been the result of a temporary necessity, a compromise for the present, that left it on a very insecure basis:—"With respect to the emperor, various reasons united to turn his views toward peace. For, on the one hand, he stood in need of succours against the Turks, which the Protestant princes refused to grant while the edicts of Worms and Augsburg remained in force; . . . and, after various negotiations, a treaty of peace was concluded at Nuremberg, A.D. 1532, between the emperor and the Protestant princes, on the following conditions:—That the latter should furnish a subsidy for carrying on the war against the Turks, and acknowledge Ferdinand as lawful king of the Romans,"* &c. Thus, the suspension of hostilities was the result of a stern necessity,—the brief and uncertain lull of the volcano whose convulsions might soon become still more terrible.

In A.D. 1542, the emperor renewedly discovered his hostile intentions by turning against the Elector of Cologne, and by summoning him to answer the charges to be preferred against him. In the mean time, in the Low Countries,

* Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 34.

his Protestant subjects were persecuted with unrelenting severity. At Worms he silenced the Protestant ministers; and, that he might be unembarrassed by the Turks in his efforts at this time to destroy the church, he sent overtures of peace to Constantinople.

The Council of Trent, summoned for the same sinister purpose, assembled, and commenced its deliberations,—a sanhedrim of bigoted and fierce ecclesiastics, who were again to deliver Jesus to Pilate to be crucified. A solemn protestation against a council, called solely by the Papal authorities and under their immediate control, was without effect. Its sessions began in A.D. 1546, and were in secret; but enough transpired at the time to make it patent to all that the church of the book was to be destroyed, and that on a sudden a blow was to be struck that should at once annihilate the Protestant interest. Charles, that he might be ready to enforce its expected decrees, hastened his military preparations.

The death of Luther just at this juncture—an event which was regarded in all Papal circles as a most propitious coincident—augmented the gloom that hung in increasing darkness over the Protestant cause.

A decisive battle, fought on the Elbe, April

24, A.D. 1547, completed the catastrophe. The unhappy confederates fell before a tact and a generalship to which they were not equal, and were placed completely at the mercy of a foe bent on their extermination. Resist they could not. Their armies were subdued and their leaders dispersed or in captivity. Supplication without retraction would be vain. It would fall on the ear of the deaf adder. Flight was impossible, and whichever way they looked it was "a red, red sea from shore to shore."

And now, at this fearful crisis, it is that there occurs another of those wonderful interventions to which the church had so often been indebted for her safety. An army of a hundred thousand Turks, already victorious in battle, are wrenching from Ferdinand his Hungarian crown, and their powerful fleet hovers menacingly on the unprotected coasts of Sicily and Naples. Even Maurice betrays his trust and suddenly heads the Protestant confederacy. The astonished Charles flies to Passau, and the Council of Trent disperse in dismay. The distress of the Papal party forced a capitulation.

The Protestants, armed simply in self-defence, and seeking only for religious toleration, were ready to listen to terms, and, to save the effu-

sion of fraternal blood, agreed to march against Solyman, if on that condition Protestantism could be permanently established and its open book and holy ministry freed from further molestation. Ferdinand seized eagerly this proposition, influenced the chafed and defeated Charles to sign the treaty, and the pacification of Passau was consummated :—a religious peace, to which Rome was driven under terror of the Turkish sword.

But toward the Protestant cause it was a bare and a reluctant suspension of direct hostilities. And the struggles by which it reached this precarious security belonged to the sinister locality on which was placed the left foot of the angel, and which were wholly unknown to the happier experience of the church in the New World. In it, no longer trammelled by state control or old or wrong opinions, she gained no stinted growth underneath the overshadowing walls of a venerable Establishment; nor is her very being, like that of her transatlantic sister at the present time, threatened by the encroachments of Rome.

While Germany thus warred, and gained her bare permit to live in the heart of an enemy's country, England became the scene of remarkable changes, which, while they fa-

voured the existence and growth of the church, surrounded her nevertheless at the same time with many uncongenial influences not felt beyond the Atlantic.

Henry VIII., quite as imperious as the sovereign pontiff whose ecclesiastical supremacy and benefices he appropriated, became a Protestant, not from conviction, but from circumstances. Had the fear of offending Charles not been in the ascendant in Italian circles, the desired divorce of Catharine would have been sanctioned, and Henry would have remained the fast friend of the Papacy. He cast off its jurisdiction, indeed, but retained its spirit, and sought to transfer to himself a papal supremacy over Great Britain:—to fix the star that fell from the papal tiara into the Northern Sea in his own crown.

Ignorant of the true nature of that kingdom which is not of this world, it seems to have occurred to him as most reasonable that the crown of that spiritual lordship now lost to HIS HOLINESS should grace the brow of some other than that of Messiah alone. Investing himself, therefore, with a ghostly rule, he exercised to a considerable extent an arbitrary spiritual domination. Cranmer's superior intelligence modified indeed his usurpations; but

his influence over the church was untoward and his reign oppressive.

Mary's ultimate accession restored Popery again, and that, also, with an easy transition. The poor Protestants were renewedly treated with extreme rigour. England's gentler nature recoiled in horror at witnessing tortures, unprecedented for their cruelty, inflicted on men the most venerable and the most virtuous in her realms.

The accession of Elizabeth re-established the Protestant faith. But it was a Protestantism which, while it rejected in part the Catholic, rejected also in part the Protestant, opinions; putting itself in opposition, in many respects, to both, and laying the foundation for those animosities and persecutions which reveal to our calm retrospection the imprint on English soil of the left foot of the angel.

Elizabeth loved a spiritual supremacy,—instituted her Court of High Commissions, which has not unjustly been called “the British Inquisition,”—issued the “Act of Uniformity,”—denied that the Scriptures were the only rule of faith and practice; and, claiming that the fathers of the church in the first four centuries furnished an improved and a matured ecclesiasticism not found in the Scriptures alone, demanded that

all her subjects should conform to her establishment. Non-conformists were oppressed. Many of them, after leaving their country and wandering into Holland, embarked finally for America, taking the track opened for them in the paths of the sea.

In Switzerland, Protestantism won her toleration by the valour of her sons. Her troubled life, perpetuated amid the factions of Geneva and the subtlety of Jesuitism, has, however, finally met the fate that seems impending over all her sister-confederacies in Europe.

Scotland, nourished at the fountains of Geneva and roused by the wild eloquence of Knox, embraced a Christianity which acknowledged no rule of faith and practice save the one fairly and sufficiently derived from the open book in the angel's hand. But, nevertheless, after the struggle of centuries, with the strong fetters of the Establishment upon her vigorous limbs, she has at length also been driven into her exodus, and in that solemn event has fully asserted the superior excellence of her American and her model Presbyterianism.

In France, the contest for religious toleration was long, vigorous, often most promising, but finally disastrous. In the very era in which

Islamism experienced the greatest defeats and the crescent waned permanently before the cross,—in which, indeed, the Turks met with those irreparable reverses from which they have never since recovered,—the revocation of the Edict of Nantes occurred, A.D. 1685.

This ruined in that kingdom the Protestant cause, filled Geneva, the mountain-gorges of the Alps, Holland, England, and America, with French refugees. A million fled during the extreme rigour of that long-continued persecution that knew no mercy, and a hundred thousand perished in dungeons, at the stake, or by the sword.

The drain upon France became a great political event. It gave creation to Holland: to it, and to England also, it gave the balance of power, and likewise furnished the American colonies—on the North River and in other places—with many of their most valuable acquisitions. New York became a Huguenot island; and her prestige and her wonderful prosperity is still welling up from these secret fountains.

Providence, too, has his reprisals, and avenged his servants in that “plat” in which they suffered. The bloody scenes of the subsequent revolution might well be expected to

follow such an exhaustion of national purity and conservatism. The councils of cruel Rome had well-nigh ruined France,—had sent a cancer on her cheek and a wolf into her breast,—had first shed her best blood and expatriated her best citizens,—and then had left her to the tender mercies of men educated, by the example of their persecuting sires, in the school of a most brutal violence.

These, in the next age, became in their turn the ministers of avenging Heaven, in whose bosoms there was no pity and in whose cruelties no relentings. By them were the fearful butcheries of the Revolution enacted:—a wanton waste of life more terrible than any ever known in any example of former times; a “reign of terror” that could exist only in the lawlessness of such a generation.

And now, after a long interval, on a review of such scenes of horror, and on following the refugees to their respective retreats in the Old and in the New World, it is not difficult to determine whether those who fled to Geneva, to Holland, to England, or those that crossed the ocean, took the most desirable path. Geneva has passed substantially into the hands of the Catholics. Holland is losing her Protestantism by the plottings of her foes and by the

emigration of her children to the New World; and what will be the destiny of England before ten years shall have passed away, time will show. Developments thus far, in any event, award the wisdom of a happier selection to those who followed the angel's track across the sea.

Staten Island, the beautiful valleys of the Hudson and the Mohawk, the James River in Virginia, and the Trent, in North Carolina, became in an early day the secure retreat of thousands. The number, wealth, and prosperity of these settlements, in contrast with the disfranchisements, increasing poverty, and failing struggles of those left behind in the Old World, are of themselves a demonstration of the correctness of the view now taken, even though that view were not endorsed by the vision of John.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ISLAMISM AND THE REFORMATION.—CONTINUED.

Across the land the crescent flew,—
It flew across the sea ;
It shook the Papal turrets hoar ;
It shook the West for thee.

How wonderfully also were the fortunes of the church, amid all the foregoing strifes and changes, influenced by Ishmael! The fall of Constantinople led to the revival of letters and to the study of the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written: a most material auxiliary to the opening of the book in the angel's hand. The subsequent wars and invasions of the Turks led finally to the sale of indulgences under the pontificate of Leo X. It was the method suggested by the unscrupulous pontiff, and relied upon by him to raise the means of conducting a crusade against the Moslem infidel.

“In fact,” said Luther, “the war with the Turks was the war of the Pope. It was an

offensive war, and a war founded on no good principle. It was made a pretext for exhausting Germany of its money by the sale of indulgences." But for this, then, the controversy between Luther and Tetzels would not have occurred. It was one of the indispensable links in the chain of causes which led on to the great Reformation.

Indeed, the rise, progress, and best successes of that reformation synchronize with the rising and progressing fortunes of the Ottomans in Europe. When their empire culminates and begins to decline, Catholicism begins to repair her losses and to rise again to power. Seventeen years after Eugene's great victory over failing Turkey, A.D. 1699, the Order of the Jesuits is revived, and their withering councils secretly influence the cabinets of princes, and proscribed and manacled Protestantism steadily loses, one by one, her territorial acquisitions, and commences to be beaten back from the foot of the Alps to the British Channel.

And, if the decline of Protestantism and the recovery of the Papacy shall continue to keep pace with the decline and the probably approaching fall of Turkey in the future as it has in the past, its ultimate disappearance

from Europe is quite inevitable; and Rome—ambitious Rome—is yet destined to erect, on the ruins of fallen rivalries, a throne more magnificent and powerful than that which crowned the seven hills in the palmiest days of Hildebrand or Leo X.

The incursions and the conquests of the Turks in Europe, from A.D. 1453 to A.D. 1697,—a period of two hundred and forty-four years,—were mighty, providential indirections, making Ishmael the blind yet effective umpire between the church and her powerful foes, calling off the persecutors just on the eve of their success, and that, from time to time, to attend to their own safety.

During this period,—the period memorable in all time, because traversed by the events and consequences of the great Reformation,—Rome continued to be besieged in all her coasts. The *Ægean* Sea and the Mediterranean continued to be swept by successive fleets, fitted out by the indefatigable Porte. Its armies followed each other perpetually, and successively also, into Austria, Hungary, and Transylvania. The two last-named regions were brought under Ottoman rule, and retained for one hundred and seventy years in defiance of the Western powers. Indeed, the warlike character of the

Turks at this time, the boldness and military skill of their leaders, their frequent enterprises of war and bloody victories, exhausted the empire, and were its perpetual terror and scourge.*

Having, however, at the end of this period, fulfilled its mission,—having concentrated and exhausted hostilities on itself that would otherwise have expended their fury in the extermination of the church,—and having afforded the church her providential opportunity of flight across the sea,—its power was broken. Prince Eugene, in A.D. 1697, gained over it a victory from which it never recovered. It lost provinces, kingdoms, and the power of recuperation, in that defeat. The peace concluded in A.D. 1699 gave back to the empire Transylvania, Hungary, Asaph, the Ukraine, and Podolia,—the entire peninsula of the Morea to the Isthmus of Corinth, including Dalmatia.

From this epoch, the steady decline of the Ottoman strength and prowess is marked; and it continues to the present hour to give out still the tokens of a deep and fatal decay in

* Mosheim's Eccl. History, Sixteenth Century, and Milnor's, covering the same period; Robertson's Charles V., from book iii. to x. inclusive.

all those respects in which it had been formidable and terrible before.

The period selected for the great revival of religion was one marked by the skill, courage, and culture of the Rulers of the earth. Conspicuous among these were Henry VIII., Francis I., Charles V., and Leo X. But, among these, Solymán the Great shone with a transcendent lustre.

His accession to the throne in A.D. 1521 was at once the summit of its grandeur and the signal for the outbursting of Moslem propagandism anew in its aggressive wars. Belgrade, deemed at that time the great barrier in the North against Turkish invasion, was invested by the sultan, and soon fell into his hands. Against Rhodes, the impregnable fortress of the Archipelago, defended by the chivalry of eight Christian nations, and hitherto the terror of the Saracens, he persevered in a siege of five months, with a fleet of four hundred sail and an army of one hundred and forty thousand men. And, though at a loss of one hundred thousand of his troops, he continued the contest until it was reduced to his sway.

This earnest of his iron will and pledge of his future career was succeeded by the con-

quest of the Crimea. Hungary shortly after delivered up the keys of her proud capital to the fierce Solyman. The bloody Caled had revived in his person; and the right hand of Ishmael wanted not one to wield its scimitar. The whole country, as far as Raab, blackened by the flames of war, was encumbered and pestilential from the mangled remains of two hundred thousand inhabitants.

In A.D. 1529 his victorious army sat down before the capital of Austria; and, though arrested at this point, and obliged to retreat on account of the fall rains, he reappeared in the spring, A.D. 1532, at the head of two hundred thousand men, against Charles V. He finally intrenched himself on the Danube, in which place he received and accepted the emperor's propositions of peace. Shortly after this he partially subdued the Venetian islands, and, recruiting his forces, prepared for new enterprises.

In 1541 he again invaded Hungary; and numerous conflicts renewedly shook the troubled West, until Charles succeeded in negotiating another treaty of peace with his formidable rival. This treaty, nevertheless, was speedily forgotten, and Transylvania was added to the dominions of the sultan. He died A.D.

1566, while actively engaged in a war with Hungary.

The following corresponding dates are worthy of special attention, since they furnish the succinct evidence of providential intervention to save the church, while the Reformation was in progress, through the agency of Moslem armies.

In A.D. 1521 Luther is condemned by the Diet at Worms, and by a ruse of his friends lies concealed at the Wartburg; and at the same time Solyman draws his terrific scimitar and threatens the West with eventual subjugation. The empire is skirted with hostile fleets and armies, and many a fair province is laid waste with fire and sword.

In A.D. 1524 Clement VIII. sent his legate to the Diet at Nuremberg, breathing threatenings and slaughter against the Reformation, and demanding of the princes of the empire the execution of the decree of Worms against Luther. In the same year, and when his safety is in imminent peril, Solyman again entered Hungary in force, gained a signal victory, received the keys of the conquered capital, and put to death in the rural districts two hundred thousand citizens.

The tranquillity enjoyed after the first Diet

of Spire was interrupted, in A.D. 1529, by a second Diet in the same place. In the same year the sultan appeared with a vast army and commenced the siege of Vienna. The persecutors, eager to ruin the Reformation, had to turn back, to repel the foe that hung in terror on their bleeding rear; and at this juncture it was that Luther, accused of indifference as to the Turkish invasion, wrote his celebrated letter in favour of the war against the Turks.*

The severe decree against the Protestants issued by order of Charles, ever under the controlling influence of the Pope and his cardinals, and which led the alarmed Protestants to assemble at Smalcald, A.D. 1530, occurred simultaneously with the revived hostilities of Solyman against Hungary. The Catholics, alarmed at his progress, were again forced to abandon their bloody purposes and to implore the aid of the Protestants.†

In A.D. 1532 the treaty of Nuremberg was concluded, on condition that the Protestants should furnish a subsidy for carrying on the war against the Turks.

In A.D. 1541 Solyman again commenced a

* Millner, p. 515.

† Maclane's Mosheim, vol. i. pp. 33, 34.

bloody war against the West, resolved on its subjugation. It raged most fearfully during the sessions of the Council of Trent, wasting the invaded provinces with fire and sword, and as though in awful providential rebuke of that council for consigning the Protestant church to Inquisitorial and military destruction. And, just in proportion as the Catholics wasted their strength and fury upon the suffering church, Solyman was successful against them, gaining strength and maturing his plans for the conquest of Europe.

And, finally, when the pacification of Passau was pending, "the Turks had prepared a powerful fleet to ravage the coast of Naples and Sicily. . . . Besides, Solyman had ordered into the field an army of a hundred thousand men, which, having defeated a great body of Ferdinand's troops and taken several places of importance, threatened not only to complete the conquest of the province, but to drive them out of that part of Hungary. . . . Maurice, having observed Ferdinand's perplexity, offered, if peace were re-established on a secure foundation, that he would march in person with his troops into Hungary against the Turks. Such was the effect of this well-timed proposal, that Ferdinand, desti-

tute of every other prospect of relief, became the most zealous advocate whom the confederates could have employed to urge their claims; and there was hardly any thing that they could have demanded which he would not have chosen to grant, rather than have retarded a pacification to which he trusted as the only means of saving his Hungarian crown.”*

In this extraordinary manner was the war of extermination against the Protestants, though resolved upon, and with hostilities already begun in several instances, kept in arrest from time to time. The Catholic princes needed the aid of their Protestant subjects, and on one occasion sought and obtained the aid of the condemned Luther's vigorous pen in favour of what was termed the defensive war. Protestant and Catholic were exhorted to make common cause against a common enemy.

The Reformers experienced for many successive years these alternations of papal smiles and frowns, supplications and persecutions. When the Turks were driven back, her foes resorted at once to their cruel remedy for heresy,—“the cautery and the knife.” But, just

* Robertson's Charles V. ; book x. pp. 412, 413.

as they were congratulating themselves, and were about to sit down to the long-delayed banquet of blood, they are suddenly called off to meet the fierce Ishmael thundering at their invaded gates.

Thus, while Islamism remained, the woe or the scourge of Christendom, Protestantism gradually rose and prevailed. But now, since Turkey has commenced her fatal decline and is just ready to disappear from Europe, Protestantism is also in the same perilous condition there, and is likely to lose very soon her last inch of European soil.

But her decline and that of Turkey is accompanied with the steady and simultaneous growth of Romanism in Europe and of Protestantism in America.

The decline of Protestantism in Europe is not at present a loss by persecution or by a return of her converts to Popery, but by a vast exodus which has lasted for more than a century, which still continues and increases, and which year by year makes yet more brilliant and unmistakable the luminous footprint of the angel in the sea.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WITNESSES NOT SLAIN.

The last are fallen, unwept, that bore
The hated cross in days of yore ;
They sleep as though, despite the rack,
The soul departed might come back.

THE measurement of the holy places and the death and resurrection of the witnesses are the next events marked by the prophet, and which are to precede and accompany the passing away of the second woe. Along this track, therefore, let us take our way, that we may reach and understand the character and tendency of the events of our own times, so startling and portentous, and which are hardly passed away in a sea of blood ere new and threatening masses are beginning to gather and to hang heavy and dark over the earth.

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and

measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”* God took formal possession of the land of Canaan by lot. It was measured and thus appropriated.† This method of taking possession of the Holy Land made the act of measuring, in prophetic parlance, to signify the appropriation of that which was measured.

To “divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth” was all the same as the taking actual possession of these places. The appearance of an angel with a measuring-line, and with it measuring Jerusalem, was the revelation of the divine intention again to take possession of the fallen and abandoned city.

The word of God—“the only infallible *rule* of faith and practice”—began in the early part of the seventh century to be used as a measuring-rod or rule, in its discriminative application to a true and a false Christianity. A large proportion of the visible church was by this rule declared to have lost its church-state, and the Pope in consequence, even as early as A.D. 606, was quite generally regarded as the man of sin.

* Rev. xi. 1, 2.

† Josh. xxiv. 13.

The court which was without was a square enclosure, covering an area much larger than that covered by the temple. Hence, the emblem suggests that the rejected portion of the visible church, at the time intended by the prophet, should comprise by far the greater part of it. This was given to be trodden down of Gentile feet, or by idolaters.

These, it is generally conceded, were the Goths and Vandals, who overran and subdued the Roman empire, appropriated its religion, its lands, and its laws, as their own, and became themselves Romans. Christianity, already sadly deteriorated, was made far more so under the profane alliance with its idolatrous converts. The Pope and Bishop of Rome aided also in its total desecration. He conformed it, with misguided zeal, to the pagan tastes of the conquerors, that he might thereby the more readily turn them into Christians.

Christianity, while thus appearing to conquer the victors, but conquered itself. The conversion was not of barbarism to Christianity, but of Christianity to barbarism. Religion fell in its holy city, or in the visible church; and, despite the resistance of a small and a retreating minority, its rule of faith, its

atonement, and its sanctity, were alike trampled under Gentile feet.

The same sagacious ecclesiastic that filled the church with idolaters restored also the broken succession of the Cæsars, by becoming himself the true source of imperial and kingly power. The imperial, the consular, and the senatorial forms of government shone for ages in the capital of the Cæsars. But the last of the Cæsars finally disappeared, and the ensigns of the throne and of the palace were transferred to Constantinople. In the Eternal City, and throughout the kingdoms of the West, the savages of the North and their successors held the mastery. The division of the imperial rule between Rome and Constantinople was all that saved the empire, at this time, from total extinction. The interregnum lasted for two hundred years. "The day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."*

From this epoch the Pope and Bishop of Rome, proclaimed by the emperor at Constantinople universal bishop, and being at the same time a native Roman and a true patrician, took up the fallen sceptre of the Cæsars, and, by conferring it on Charlemagne, restored the

* Rev. viii. 12.

long-lost glory of the West. From France the imperial dignity passed to Germany, and from thence, in the memory of many now living, it reverted again to France. It was conferred by Pius VII. on Napoleon. He assumed the golden crown of Charlemagne and the iron crown of Italy.

Rome not only restored her ecclesiastical and her civil ascendancy by her wily and ghostly representative; she also recruited her exhausted energies by absorbing in her own the hardier manhood of Northern nations. The sources of her ruin became thus, and in more respects than one, the sources of her renovated strength; and she again reigned "over the kings of the earth."* It was, indeed, a wonderful event:—the actual and the healthful reproduction of an expired life, and that in the very moment and by the very means of its total extinction.

But, alas, in thus for the second time setting her iron heel on her recovered and submissive domain she also placed, as the price of her triumph, her dishonoured Christianity under Gentile feet. Its true God gave place to patron saints and local deities. In all her sanctuaries His praise was given to crucifixes and graven

* Rev. xvii. 18.

images. Its blessed Redeemer was made inferior to the Virgin, and was set aside in his gracious mediation by a vast army of saints and martyrs. Its unadorned simplicity of worship disappeared in a pompous ritual. Its purifying and intelligible utterances were supplanted by unintelligible and awful mysteries addressed to the senses. "Signs and lying wonders" were made the incentives to obedience and the sources of religious veneration. In a word, almost all that was pure, distinctive, and divine became, as the result, outcast and down-trodden in the visible church.

The period in which this state of things began to be is marked, first, by the discriminative application of the rule or rod (referred to as above by the prophet) in determining the limits of the true church. Such use of the word had become common in the beginning of the seventh century.

Secondly, in A.D. 606, when Phocas proclaimed the Pope of Rome universal bishop, he became at once to the godly the revealed head of the apostasy, and was denounced as the Antichrist of this prophecy and of the Scriptures.

Thirdly, he was the man of sin before he became a temporal prince: since the little

horn spoken of by Daniel* was, nevertheless, a horn, or power, before it rose above the three dynasties which it subverted. Indeed, the Pope's subsequent assumption of the dignity of a temporal prince was the lesser form of the iniquity. These are some of the reasons which suggest the propriety of commencing our reckoning of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the prophecy with the commencement of the visible exaltation of the Pope to spiritual supremacy in the church, *i.e.* A. D. 606.

Another distinct ground on which we arrive at the same conclusion may be found in the prophecy of Daniel.† “The king of fierce countenance,” and understanding dark sentences, arose, according to this prophet, at the latter end of the four kingdoms into which Alexander's dominions had been divided. He terminated their reign when he conquered Persia. Mohammed was fierce in the emotions of his cruel nature and in the principles and sympathies of his faith. His successes were also achieved by incoherent or dark sentences. He obtained his Koran‡ in sentences,

* Dan. vii. 8.

† Dan. viii. 23.

‡ “The fragments of the Koran were produced at the discretion of Mohammed. . . . The pages, without order

as he affirmed, in which the last, however contradictory, modified and explained all that went before. Sentences most dark and contradictory became also the ultimate foundations of his power, gave creation to his army and victory to his lieutenants. A coincidence so striking should not be overlooked; and it may legitimately influence our judgment with respect to the time of the end, since the rise of the Southern Antichrist was evidently synchronical with the exaltation of the Papacy. They are both the renowned enemies of progress and of piety in the North and in the South, originate at the same time, run to the present day their parallel courses. And is it not a probable conclusion that they are destined to perish nearly simultaneously, and especially as to each is assigned the same prophetic period?*

The period also in which the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth is the same. And it is quite natural to conclude that their sack-

or connection, were cast into a domestic chest." Farther down, on the same page, the Koran is described as "the endless, incoherent rhapsody of fable and precept and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea, which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds."—*Gibbon*, vol. v. p. 110.

* Twelve hundred and sixty days.

cloth garb was the result of Papal and Moham-
medan ascendancy over the very regions of
the earth in which a primitive Christianity
had previously spread her principles and her
churches. Their respective empires were en-
gines of fearful misrule and of spiritual desola-
tion. And during most of the long interval
that has elapsed—an interval already filling up
nearly the whole of the assigned cycle—the true
church has found a bare toleration among the
Saracens, or a precarious retreat in the gorges
of bleak and inaccessible mountains. The
periods of revival, of success, or of repose, have
been ever brief, and invariably partial. These
even have had their tears, have been accom-
panied with political and social oppressions.
On the whole, in all Papal and in all Moham-
medan countries, Zion has ever bowed her
dejected head, has ever been placed in a
comparatively depressed and sorrowful con-
dition.

Her members also have been comparatively
very inconsiderable; her home the circum-
scribed spot occupied by the temple and the
altar. Such is the small but consecrated en-
closure; while her numerous and powerful ad-
versaries are represented as spreading them-
selves over the whole area of the open court,

whose sacred things they impiously monopolize and profanely trample.

Her witnesses, likewise, during this same prophetic interval, have been but two,—the smallest possible number admissible in law to establish a fact. So few indeed have they been, that their unbroken succession during this prophetic cycle has been often disputed by their enemies; and confessedly by us they have been, though sufficient, yet barely sufficient to continue a visible descent and to maintain the credibility of a holy testimony in a world abandoned elsewhere in all its vast communities to the reign of atheism or false religion.

Such is the melancholy image presented by the prophet, and such have been the corresponding realities of history. “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.”*

After the death and resurrection of the witnesses the state of oppression shall cease. But that blessed hour of Zion’s joy and enfranchisement has not yet come. Her foes are first to kill her witnesses, before they can rise again

* Rev. xi. 3.

in the final and joyous prevalence of their truthful prophecy:—"And when they shall have finished their testimony," *i.e.* in sackcloth, "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them."* Such an event, it is maintained by some, has already occurred. A brief examination of this question, however, must, we think, result in the conviction that, sad as has frequently been the state of the true church in Catholic Europe, a sadder hour still awaits her there.

In the twelfth century the country of the Albigenses was made desolate by the Crusaders, under Simon de Montfort. The testimony of the witnesses was for a season partially, if not wholly, suppressed within its territorial limits. But it was at the same time fully uttered in other places. The suppression was not such as that represented in the prophecy,—the deep silence of the grave over all the kingdoms of Europe, and that suddenly and simultaneously.

Two hundred years afterward, (A.D. 1400,) the Waldenses, in the valley of Pragela, were also nearly or quite exterminated. Starving

* Rev. xi. 7.

mothers ascended the mountains with their children and perished. One hundred and eighty little ones were found dead in their cradles. Other churches, however, escaped the visitation and continued their testimony. In A.D. 1460, or sixty years after, in the valley of Loyse, four hundred infants were smothered in a cave in the arms of their dying mothers, and three thousand disciples slain. In this valley the church at this time became extinct, but not at the same time elsewhere.

One hundred years subsequently to this, (A.D. 1560,) the Calabrian Waldenses were wholly exterminated. Silence and darkness spread over that island in which they had maintained their suffering mission during ninety years. But the witnesses still lived and testified in many other places in Europe, notwithstanding.

In after-times, the Inquisition consigned the true church in Spain to its dungeons, and her voice was heard no more among the living in that kingdom. Subsequently, her testimony was silenced in France. Her Huguenots were slain or expatriated. At another time, it was for a season suppressed in Scotland by Archbishop Laud, and by the bloody Mary in England.

But these, though terrible, were but partial, exterminations,—circumscribed fields of slaughter, placed at distant intervals from each other, occurring in different and widely-separated districts and kingdoms; and no one of them occurring on any single isolated plat, can possibly be claimed to have been at any time universal. Rome, indeed, at the successive slaughter of the Albigenes, the Waldenses, the Huguenots, held her jubilees, and claimed that the church, in these respective areas, was wholly extinct; but she did not claim at any period that the church was also simultaneously extinct in every other country subject to her rule. If she ever did, it was falsely, and amid the contradiction of surrounding facts and existing witnesses.

But when she shall “*kill them*,” (according to this prophecy,) “their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified; and they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because

these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”*

Thus, when she shall actually *kill* them,—when this hour of her final triumph shall have fully come,—she is to survey the whole field at once, and, during three years and a half, claim on the clearest evidence—evidence wholly uncontradicted and universally convincing—that they are no more. On the highway of the great spiritual city—her great ecclesiastical domain, covering ten kingdoms with its mighty hierarchy and ghostly rule, the broad frequented thoroughfare of peoples and nations, kindreds and tongues, a spectacle for the whole world to gaze at—their bodies shall lie exposed to every eye, shall be spurned by every foot.

The jubilee also, like the massacre, shall be universal. It shall not, as heretofore, confine itself to Italy, but shall comprehend all the kingdoms subject to Papal domination. If an event like this had ever occurred, its great publicity, as well as its unprecedented cruelty, would have so chronicled it in the annals of every age, that to have questioned it now would have been simply absurd, and quite impossible.

* Rev. xi.

And, if the witnesses have not yet been slain, we cannot now, at this late day, go back to the seventh century in commencing our computation of the prophetic interval under consideration.

But not only has the event not taken place as described in the prophecy: the witnesses themselves are witnesses against this conclusion, since they still exist, still prophesy in sackcloth, in all Papal countries,—are still depressed, disfranchised, and sorrowful. A single glance at the state of the Protestant church in Europe must satisfy the most incredulous that her present state is more deplorable by far than it was three hundred years ago. But if the death and resurrection of her witnesses has taken place long since, why does she still prophesy in sackcloth,—since, when the departed life revives in the dead bodies of the fallen witnesses and they stand upon their feet, the sackcloth drops from them and they are ever after exalted to heaven? The death and resurrection of the witnesses is therefore, we conclude, an event yet to come; and the state of things in Europe, according to this view of the question, must become worse than it now is for Zion before it can become better.

The causes and tendencies of recent convul-

sions, and of the present precarious peace, invest themselves therefore with great religious as well as political interest, and awaken an intense desire in all to know what are to be the events which are now imminent in the outgoings of that Providence whose footfalls and marshallings are already shaking the earth, “and with fear of change perplexing monarchs.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ISHMAEL AND THE WESTERN ALLIES.

“Proud Saracen, pollute no more
The shrines by martyrs built of yore !
From each wild mountain’s trackless crown
In vain thy gloomy castles frown.”

WARTON.

THE invaders of the empire from the North, inured to hardness, though they prostrated, nevertheless renovated, the kingdoms of the West. The effeminate offspring of patrician luxury, mingling their blood with the rude conquerors of their shattered states, restored again the bone and muscle of earlier and better days.

But the Eastern division of the empire lost its Asiatic provinces without experiencing a corresponding benefit. A humanity already greatly deteriorated still continued to mingle blood with blood, and to carry down among the Grecians a progressive physical and social degeneracy. Asiatic Greece was absorbed by Ishmael. In the wreck of its cities and provinces there originated an amalgamation of

its races with their Arab conquerors. This counteracted for generations the tendency to national weakness, and gave to the empire of the caliphs its prestige and stability. Its races, possessed of a mightier manhood, were born to dominion.

While, therefore, the West and the South, the Latins and the Saracens, rose up in a renovated humanity, the East, isolated by her position and repelled by her antipathies, was not reached or benefited by the rushing and restless tides of social change or of physical regeneration. Greece, the world's admired centre of learning and refinement, though possessed of every other advantage over the Latins and the Saracens, was nevertheless utterly incapable of self-defence,—was daily tending, by the operation of an irresistible law, to national decay and political ruin.

In her rise to supremacy in the fourth century, her Constantinople, at that time the world's proud imperial capital, became also the metropolis of Christendom and assumed a protectorate over all its sacred places. The decline of Rome transferred ultimately to her the imperial purple and gave to her the temporary supremacy. This she feebly grasped, and therefore but briefly held. The revived

energy of the Latins oppressed her effeminacy, and the Roman bishop at every turn of fortune and of controversy came up in the ascendant, obtaining ultimately from Constantinople, and by imperial proclamation, the spiritual lordship over the East and the West.

Just at this juncture also, and most unfortunately for the Greek church, Ishmael gained his terrible nationality and rushed fiercely from the desert. Greece could not resist; and Asia was lost to the church and to Cæsar.

The holy places, sacred to the memory of Christ and his apostles, from this unpropitious hour became the objects of a painful interest. Images were broken, altars subverted, crucifixes trampled, and the holy sepulchre itself marred and defiled.

The Crusades of the Middle Ages were undertaken to retrieve these losses, and to restore to the church a spot so blended in her visions with all that now to her was most awful and most tender in her recollections of her Lord.

The Crusaders obtained and held disputed possession of the Holy Land, and protected it from Moslem profanation; but it was a hopeless and a wasteful protectorate. An uncongenial climate and the scimitar thinned the ranks of Christian armies, deprived them of

their conquests, and brought back upon misguided Europe a bloody retaliation. In the event she herself was invaded, the last of the Cæsars fell, and to this day "the crescent surmounts the cross on the dome of St. Sophia."

Napoleon I., though he arose in the first instance as a popular leader, discovered the highway to supreme power to be through the church. His crown must come from papal hands, his legitimacy from the unction of St. Peter, the stability of his throne from the banks of the Tiber. He hence became a true son of the church, catered to her superstitions, and merited her blessing by the protection which he extended over her holy places at Jerusalem.

When he, however, fell before the stern Muscovite, the protectorate fell also into other hands,—was assumed by the czar, who, without contradiction, has been permitted to retain it till recently, as though it had been ever his, held in his own right, and that by common consent. In executing the commission conferred in this protectorate, he gradually encroached upon the territories of the Ottomans.

The Sublime Porte, cognizant of the continued desecration of the holy places, was nevertheless appealed to in vain by Nicholas.

Its subjects could not be restrained. The antipathies of Ishmael to churches, altars, crucifixes, holy places, and holy things, were legitimate, were ever conscientious and on a religious account. He was ever the sworn and bloody foe of idolatry. In every place, and especially at Jerusalem, the venerated remains of a Christian antiquity, held most inviolably sacred by the church, was ever made the object of his most implacable rage and violence.

This it is which has unhinged the world's harmonies for more than twelve hundred years. In the Middle Ages it roused Europe to the wars of the cross, and that by outrages committed on devotees peaceably though superstitiously gathered around the sepulchre of their Lord. The indignities also practised upon the bishop of the Greek church and the Russian consul at Jerusalem on Easter Monday, supplemented as it was by a forcible transfer of stipulated sanctuary privileges from the Greek to the Latin Christians, led to the recent war of the Allies.

In A.D. 1673, it was conceded to Louis XIV. by the sultan, in a treaty, "that the King of France be recognised the sole protector of the Catholics in the East." Secondly, "that churches be erected or repaired without the

previous authorization of the Porte." Thirdly, "that the holy shrines shall be restored to the possession of the Latins, because they were conquered by Frenchmen in the Crusades." But subsequent changes had materially altered the relations of parties, and the holy places, in the judgment of many, had, both in justice and in fact, fallen back again to the Greek protectorate.

In A.D. 1850, France revived her claim, based upon the above-named expired treaty; but Napoleon was then a feeble recency in war and in diplomacy, and the threatening attitude of Nicholas led him to waive for the moment his claim.

In the subsequent agitations of the questions at issue, France appears as the protector of the Latin, and Russia of the Greek Christians within the Turkish dominions. The war had placed Turkey under the control of the Allies; and, while it was claimed "that no Power shall claim the right of exercising an official protectorate over the subjects of the Sublime Porte, no matter to which rite they belong," France effectually protected the Catholic Greeks in Turkey.

The sultan had, on one occasion, determined to expel all Greeks not his own subjects from

Constantinople. It was on account of the animosity of the Greeks against the Turks. It was normal, it was universal; and no Greek could be trusted, whether he belonged to the one or the other rite. France at once demanded that all Greeks belonging to the Catholic church should be made an exception to the rule. The sultan refused to make any exception. "The French ambassador," says the London Times, "thereupon took fire, and demanded nothing short of the dismissal of the Turkish ministers, on whom the conduct of the war and the existence of the empire depend, and vowed that if satisfaction were refused he should embark with his whole embassy in forty-eight hours."

Thus the depression of the Greek and the exaltation of the Catholic church followed in the train of the alliance, and signalized the decline of the Russian protectorate.

If a quarrel arose at Jerusalem between the Greek and Latin Christians, the Latins were protected; the Greeks had no one to speak on their behalf.

France obtained a firman to build a church in the Holy Land. The Pacha of Jerusalem is instructed to purchase and present a piece of ground for the building. A similar applica-

tion, formally made by Prince Menschikoff, was refused.

The Archbishop of Paris predicts that, in the event of the overthrow of Russia, the dominion of the Papacy will become universal.

“It is,” says the Roman archbishop in Quebec, “the cause of the church which has been committed to the armies of France and England; and their success while defending Turkey against an unjust aggression on the part of the enemy will, at the same time, secure to the church the twofold advantage of diminishing schismatical influence in the East, and of establishing Catholicism on a more favourable and independent footing.”

In the peace-negotiations, first and last, the phenomena that attended each step were their ever-favourable phase toward the progress of the Latin church.

“Letters from Rome state that the Pope had received from the czar an autograph letter which announced the restoration of four Roman Catholic bishops in Poland, and the establishment of six others in Russia.”

Constantinople has ever been, and yet is, the great and dreaded rival of Rome. The Latin sect is but a secession from the Greek. The Greek is the mother-church. The fall of

Constantinople, in A.D. 1453, was the fall of Rome's great competitor, and the dawn of her most hopeful processes of proselytism and absorption.

Her missionaries are ever active throughout the East, and their successes by no means inconsiderable. Her plans have been most comprehensive; the anticipated results most magnificent. Her sober attempts after universal, temporal, and spiritual rule—the mastery over the souls and the bodies of men—surpass the wildest dreams of earthly ambition. These, in her darkest reverses, have never been intermitted. In all the alternations of her changeful fortunes, during the revolutions of ages, she has not, for a single moment, lost sight of her proudest aspirations; and while she retains her organic life she never will.

The policy of every cabinet which she rules must, whatever other interest it secures, secure her ultimate triumph. The Anglican, the Protestant, and the Greek Christians are alike her rivals, and they are alike marked for the sacrifice. The emperor in her interest is alike the enemy of them all. His compliant protectorate will spread its ages over the Latin church, and over that only. The toleration of Christians of all sects by the Porte is one

thing; the protectorate of Napoleon is quite another.

The battle of Navarino, that broke the power of Turkey, placed that power completely at the mercy of her natural foe; and her remarkable preservation to the present day can only be accounted for by an inquiry into the obvious policies of Rome.

Turkey has found grace in her sight, that Greece might perish. The fall of Turkey before the successful encroachments of Russia would have restored the Greek empire, and would have placed at the head of its revived fortunes a race surpassed by no other in ambition or in battle; and the contest so long and so advantageously conducted against the Greek church would have ended in defeat and shame. The czar is, therefore, beaten back, and the hated Turk fostered, that the dominions of the Ottomans may be kept open to the continued proselytisms of Rome.

The overthrow of Russia, in the opinion of the Archbishop of Paris, will open the way for universal Papal ascendancy.

Turkey is the packhorse of France and Italy; and when she ceases to be of any further use she will be turned out upon the common to die.

England, in her solicitude for her Eastern possessions, was drawn into a war against her Anglican establishment and her Protestantism. Every blow of her sturdy arm, while it weakened the Greek church, served to strengthen her far mightier foe, and to put in jeopardy more and more her own precious faith.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ROME—HER ASPIRATIONS.

“The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”—ST. JOHN.

THE following pages, so far as they relate to unfulfilled prophecy, are introduced to close my theme. I do not set them down as certainties, but as my speculative opinions on debatable questions;—questions whose satisfactory solution must ever be left to the revelations of time.

How striking the picture of the combined weakness and strength of Rome! She is a woman, most delicate and frail; but she is supported by a monster of enormous proportions, on whose back she rides, and whose crowned horns sustain and adorn her glittering tiara. She was called to judgment at Constance, sat weak and defenceless before the tribunal that arraigned her, but rode away at last triumphant over her foes,—over the ashes of Huss and Jerome, and with princes

at her bridle-rein. Napoleon I. lorded it over her in the verdancy of his career, but bowed his neck to her iron yoke at last. She held her soft palm on the gateway of legitimacy. Her unction made sacred the persons of kings and emperors. She controlled the opinions of his subjects and of Europe; and their veneration for him, on a religious account, was to him every thing. She gave him his crown; he, in his turn, supported her ecclesiastical supremacy. He became strong in her strength; she became strong in his.

His act in taking the crown out of the hand of the pontiff and placing it on his own head, though it tended to deceive the vulgar, changed not the fact respecting his imperial homage and servility. He became religious from policy. He supported and carried the Pope, that he might the more securely support and carry his crown.

The Revolution of 1848 exalted the present imperial despot to the throne of his illustrious uncle. This same revolution made his Holiness a fugitive, until the bayonets of Frenchmen restored and supported his fallen strength. And, indeed, from the time that Phocas, Pepin, and Charlemagne gave him the mastery, until

this day, his strength has ever been in the support of Catholic princes.

There is nothing abnormal in the interference of foreign troops in the affairs of Italy. It has ever been the fact; and that fact has ever been one striking illustration of the prophecy. The Pope is in himself a cipher, but he is strong in the power of his imperial supporters.

Where is the mighty Protestantism of the League of Passau? The throne of the sovereign pontiff toppled before it, and his imperial defender sought refuge in a compliant treaty from its iron grasp. But look now on that broad field of its triumph, and where is its power? Let the martyred blood of a million Huguenots respond from the Rhone! Let Catholicized Geneva answer. Let Holland, once the keystone in the arch that supported the great Reformation, reply from amid the ruins of her crumbling towers. Let Hungary answer, now hung up "like the empty and bleeding skin of a slaughtered victim." Let Prussia answer, the last stronghold left,—bearded now, and reluctantly admitted to the peace-councils of the Allies at Paris

Such are some of the melancholy shadowings of the recent war, whose thunders have

been breaking along the confines of two ages, heralding the outgoing of the one and the incoming of the other.

Ishmael, with a piece of bread and a bottle of water, turns again his pale face toward the wilderness. The death-wail of expiring Greece is heard on the coast of the Black Sea. The protectorate has fallen to Napoleon and to Rome. Protestant Prussia has been menaced on the Rhine and scorned; and she is looking this way and that way, like one at his wits' end. England likewise—Protestant England—has been shocked at her successive misfortunes. Her lion slinks to his lair, while the sea and the waves thereof are roaring, and “men’s hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth.”

The final war upon the witnesses, it is with reason believed, is just at hand. The termination of the late war has not settled the “Italian question.” It is a volcano whose smothered tones will probably soon find utterance and amaze the world. The witnesses must fall. The beast shall overcome and kill them. Even their wild halls of nature’s masonry in the Alps shall soon be deserted, and their Northern and insular retreats refuse them

both life and sepulture. Across the left footprint of the angel disastrous twilight is sweeping, and thunderings and lightnings and voices and great hail are deepening the gloom of the descending night.

Such are the visions that, since the Revolution of 1848, flit alike athwart the political and the prophetic horizon. They are of pale and of expiring things; of old and of worn-out confederacies and nationalities. Their death-groans reach *us* even across the ocean, and their vanishing forms are fast disappearing behind the shadows of an everlasting evening.

They are also of more hopeful things,—of another age, whose young life is already coming in on the coasts of a New World. To it the footprint of the angel in the sea led the way, and in it they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. To it, also, nations are turning their eye, and “watch for it as they that watch for the morning.”

A few short years are yet assigned, according to our reckoning of prophetic time, to accomplish the predicted death of the witnesses. The wrongs and oppressions of ages shall then have reached their full. Their testimony shall then have been finished, and their garb of sackcloth dyed in the blood of a universal massacre.

In the streets of that great ecclesiastical city—that city steeped in the lust of Sodom, dark with Egyptian cruelty, the spot also of our Lord's perpetual crucifixion in the sacrifice of the mass—shall the fearful tragedy openly proceed, and reveal to all its scenes of remorseless and deliberate murder.

This awful event precedes the passing away of the second woe; and, judging from the rapidly-declining star of Ishmael, (if we had no other guide,) the catastrophe must be regarded as nigh,—yea, even at the doors.

The prophet, however, skirts the gloomy picture with a fringe of light. This sudden and destructive revival of papal oppression is to be brief and final,—the last fatal eruption of the spiritual Etna,—its unexpected and its suicidal victory. And though no Cromwell then shall live to expostulate and threaten,—no surviving Milton cry,

“Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,”—

yet in the short space of three years and a half the witnesses shall themselves revive and open again their testimony in cottages and palaces, and amid the demon-revels of the amazed Antichrist.

And, ere she shall recover from her despair, or be able to rally her forces, unexpected political confederacies shall form around the joyous witnesses and call them up to places of honour and security.

And in the same hour, simultaneously, the tenth part of the city shall fall, and in one out of the ten kingdoms despotism find a bloody grave. Such is the prophetic picture of the antecedents and concomitants of the passing away of the second woe.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FALL OF ISLAMISM.

“This is the Moslem’s hour of prayer!
’Twas Judah’s once; but fane and priest,
Altar and sacrifice, have ceased.”

MONTGOMERY.

THE second woe reached its height in the fall of Constantinople. And when the Ottoman shall relinquish his European conquests and retire to his old dominions in the Euphrates, the woe shall have passed away.

The Ottomans had a national being before they became a woe; and when they cease to be a woe they do not also necessarily cease to be a nation. Their nationality, it is believed, indeed, will end; but it will be at another time and place than the present or than Europe. When the return of expatriated Isaac shall be resisted by them in Asia, then shall they “fall without hand,” or by the immediate interposition of Heaven. Rejected from the patrimony of Isaac by the great Proprietor of heaven and earth, they in after-ages invaded

and obtained it by violence; but, as their illustrious father fell in his first contest in the tent of Abraham, and Sarah's bitter words prevailed to make the scoffer an outcast, so in the final issue he shall fall again, and that hopelessly, before the better destiny of his injured brother.

The following prophecy seems descriptive of the event:—"The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared."*

The Euphrates flowed under the walls and through the midst of the ancient Babylon, furnishing the city with an abundant supply of water, and enabling it to hold out indefinitely in a siege. Cyrus dried up *this* bed of the river by digging new channels, into which he turned the current, and opened thus, under the walls, an ample passage for his invading army.

Having taken the city by this stratagem, he made it the capital of the Persian empire. From that time the Babylonian ceased to exist,—dried up like the channel of its river. It became henceforth absorbed and lost in that of the Persian.

Hence, in Scripture parlance, the drying up of the Euphrates had both a literal and a figu-

* Rev. xvi. 12.

rative meaning. According to the latter, it signified the amalgamation with their conquerors of the people that might at any time be in possession of the ancient Chaldea. The Babylonian empire was lost in the Persian; the Persian in the Saracenic; the Saracenic in the Turkish. The prophet, in the above-quoted passage, points to a period in which the last-named occupier of this renowned site of Oriental despotism is to take the course and share the fate of its several predecessors.

The Ottomans rose to power on the Euphrates. They in after-ages made Constantinople their capital. They have, however, never lost their original territorial possessions on the Euphrates. And when in coming years they lose their hold on Europe and return again to this first and last stronghold of their national existence, they are but to return home to die.

According to this view of the subject, the second woe and the sixth vial relate to different events, but both belong successively to the history of the same people. The Ottomans rise as the Euphratean horsemen, retain this designation appropriately ever after, and return again at the time of the end to find in this very region their national sepulchre. The

passing away of the second woe, it is obvious, would not necessarily involve any more than the exclusion of the Turks from Europe; since it became the second woe when the Turks, loosed from their restraints in the Euphrates, invaded Europe and became masters of the Eastern capital. When, therefore, they shall retire again to their original domain in Asia, the second woe will have passed away.

But in the effusion of the sixth vial there is more indicated than the passing away of a woe,—the termination of a scourge to Christendom. It intimates that the very people composing that woe are thereafter no longer to be reckoned among the nations; that, when the angel shall empty the vial and spread his cloud, the pestilential drops that shall condense and fall shall bedew the pale brow of the expiring Ishmael and prove fatal to his very being. His great national artery shall cease to flow, and his succession be cut off by pestilence or war, or by amalgamation, and disappear as perfectly as a river whose channel becomes dry,—the future field for the shepherd and the reaper.

It is a reasonable conclusion, also, that, as the two great antagonists to the world's social and Christian regeneration have a distinct descrip-

tion assigned to them in the prophecy, as to their origin and progress, so, not only the one, but also the other, should have some distinct indication of their end.

The plagues are represented as preparing the way for the universal prevalence of Christ's kingdom on earth by destroying successively the enemies of his reign in the West. They sweep on in close proximity until they fall finally on the very seat of the beast, crushing the very heart of despotism, bearing throne, sceptre, and tiara into the chasm that had smouldered for ages underneath the chair of St. Peter. And why should we conclude that another and an equally-determined enemy of our Lord in the East should now escape? Did not the angel lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created the heavens and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there should be no longer any delay, but that God would finish the mystery when the seventh angel should begin to sound?

The seven last plagues were surely the fulness of plagues and the final end of vengeful visitations, since they were to reach and bear away every stronghold of iniquity from

the bosom of a sin-burdened world. The direction to the angels to pour out their vials upon the earth, as they were to prepare the way for the millennium, must have comprehended at least those portions of the earth still at that time covered with oppressive governments and with false religions. And they could not therefore have taken simply the circuit of Europe and have finally paused at Rome, but must have continued on their way till every other centre of evil had been reached and obliterated.

The first, accordingly, hovers over the citadal of political despotism; the second, over the spot where vast fleets of armed oppressors lie congregated in capacious harbours, ready to spread their sails and dye the sea with Christian blood; the third, over the rivers and fountains of the Ligurian Alps. The fourth pauses just over the broad disc of the imperial sun; the fifth, over the chair of the triple tyrant. The sixth rests not till he reaches his station in the centre of Asia, spreading the plague-spot over the doomed sultanies. And the seventh and the last rises above the prince of the power of the air. And, since all evil potencies are included, Islamism must also in these plagues have its days numbered and finished.

That this plague relates to Islamism is further evident, since the object for which the vial is poured out is the removal of the great barrier opposed to the return of the kings of the East. The Jews were opposed in their exodus from Egypt by the Egyptians, and the Canaanites crossed their march and obstructed their entrance into the Holy Land. The Mohammedans of the present day would be equally certain to refuse them peaceable possession of their own country, were they now to commence in great numbers their final immigration into it.

Daniel, in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, is believed to describe this very opposition; and Zechariah, (chapter xiv. verse 12,) the consequent miraculous ruin of the unblest foe at the time of converted Israel's restoration.

The East likewise is the place of early dawn. A bright star, as the harbinger of the sun, flames on the forehead of the morning. Hence, it has been common among sacred writers to describe any great spiritual or literal appearance of our Lord by a reference to these agreeable and beautiful objects. His advent is called the "day-spring from on high." A star seen in the east was the sign of it, and the guide of the wise men. His people "shine as

lights in the world,”—“are made kings and priests unto God.” And “the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven is to be given to his saints.” Of this great kingdom Jerusalem is to be the metropolis, and in it the throne and the succession is to be restored to the house of David.

God gave the Holy Land to Abraham and to his seed. It was to be their patrimony and their residence while the sun and moon should endure and rule the alternations of day and night. From it they were temporarily rejected for their criminal rejection of their Lord; but the very sentence containing the statement of this fact implies also their ultimate restoration:—“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.”

First in the series of instruments, the Romans trampled with iron foot this sacred and appropriated heritage. It was made by them the theatre of war and bloodshed. Other countries could be held in subjection in the peaceable exercise of power by these conquerors of the world; but *this* could not. Its inhabitants sternly and perseveringly resisted. It was therefore of necessity covered with garrisons and patrolled and harassed by exaspe-

rated soldiers. Its vineyards and gardens were turned into places for camps, battles, and sieges; nor would the infatuated tribes yield, until their cities were razed to the ground and they themselves slain or expatriated.

With unbroken resolution and a terrible courage, they ever forced the alternative upon their masters of either abandoning the province altogether or of holding possession of it by a military force. It could not therefore be cultivated and made fruitful and remunerative. Rome could but cover it with the ruin of its walled towns, break down its hedges, and set an armed heel on its desolate bosom.

The Romans lost Palestine just as they gained it,—by violence. The Saracens succeeded to its bloody rule in their turn, and made it the camping-ground for their camels and horses, and marred every remaining vestige of architectural taste or cultivated beauty. It was wrested in the end also from their hands, and that by a new race of conquerors, who, strangers alike to policy or humanity, roused the nations to the wars of the cross. It was held alternately by one or the other among the contending parties for a time; but no permanent or desirable conquests were made by any. In it “many were over-

thrown." In it, for ages, Europe, Asia, and Africa met, not to plant and build and restore, but to pluck up and cast down and to defile.

But the Crusaders had their day and their end. Their armies perished finally around the sepulchre which they defended, and its hoary walls were again broken by the hammer of the Moslem.

A new foe also rushed upon the plains of Asia from the distant East. Tamerlane, in his turn, at the head of fifteen hundred thousand horse, swept and trampled the devoted patrimony. He too had his day, and was succeeded by the Turks, who, to this hour, efface its beauty, oppress its children, and, by treading it down with Gentile feet, continue to fulfil the prophecy.

But this desolation is not to be perpetual. That land is yet to be happy and prosperous. Its wilderness is to become as Eden, its desert as the garden of God. The language in the text under consideration is in striking contrast with that employed to describe the fate of Babylon, of Rome, and of the tribes of Ishmael.

Of Babylon it is said, "It shall never be inhabited. The satyr is to dance in its streets, the wild beasts of the island are to cry in its desolate houses, and dragons in its pleasant

chambers. Never more in it shall the Arabian pitch his tent, or the shepherd make his fold. It shall be a possession for the bittern and for pools of water." Said the great Avenger, "I will sweep it with the besom of destruction."

Rome is to be "utterly burned with fire;" is to sink and disappear in the volcano that shall open under her walls like "a millstone cast into the sea." The significant language of the angel is, as she is seen to descend into the abyss, "She shall be found no more at all."

The tribes of Ishmael are likewise to perish, to be absorbed like a river lost in deep basins opened underneath its pebbly bed.

But of Jerusalem it is said, "She shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;" and—surely it is here intimated—not after that. The scene is then, we justly infer, suddenly to change. Her children are to return, to be "as aforetime," and the voice of lamentation and the shout of the oppressor to be hushed along her lengthened ruins.

"The kings of the East" reside in the East, but in exile, as is suggested by the drying up of a river to prepare the way for their ascension to power,—the removal of the oppressors from

their soil that its legitimate owners and rightful rulers may occupy it.

The Jews, though dispersed into every land, are to be found in greater numbers in Eastern Asia or beyond the Euphrates than in all other places. And, when the tidings of their gathering in vast bodies,—now at length penitent for their rejection of their Lord,—with the purpose of resettling in their long-lost Canaan, shall reach the ears of Ishmael, the cupidity and the enmity of the outcast and the usurper shall revive, “and he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many;” yet “he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”*

And when “he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas,” (the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas,) “in the glorious holy mountains,” (of Judea,)—when his camp shall thus cover the whole frontier, his troops man every mountain-pass and walled town, and guard every avenue to the Holy Land,—then shall be seen this great river, the river Euphrates, stretching from shore to shore, and sweeping on with its standards and tents and turbans, in a channel deep, broad, and

* Dan. xi. 44, 45.

impassable, between returning Israel and the land of their fathers.

And it is this river over which the angel hovers, and which he curtains with pestilential wreaths from his vial, and in whose sepulchral basins vanish forever the Euphratean Pharaohs.

“This,” says Zechariah, “shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. . . . And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.” And, as the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians, so in this event they shall spoil the smitten Ottomans. “The wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. . . . In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord.”

According to Ezekiel xxxix., seven months should be spent in burying the dead on the coasts of the sea to cleanse the land; and after

the seven months the authorities "shall sever out men of continual employment" to search for stray bodies and scattered bones, to bury them; and the passenger who in his tour through the land should chance to discover a bone should be required to "set up a sign by it, till the buriers should bury it."

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*

Thus, the drama that opens in the tent of Abraham, and reopens in the cave of Hara, closes with the return of converted Israel to his native land. A dark pall drops on Mameluke and Fatemite, Saracen and Turk; the shadows of the long night roll back, and the latter-day glory dawns, after the lapse of intervening ages, on the renovated fortunes of the house of David.

* Dan. xi. 1.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ISAAC'S PATRIMONY RESTORED.

“Nor is there—so is she bereft—
One stone upon another left.
The cross and crescent shine afar,
But where is Jacob's natal star?”

MONTGOMERY.

IN the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul insists that the promise to Abraham and to his seed was through the righteousness of faith; by which principle it was that Abraham became the father of many nations. Not a lineal descent, but faith in Christ, constituted any one a member of the patriarch's great commonwealth.

While faith thus inducted strangers and aliens and made them fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of faith, the want of it correspondingly excluded his natural descendants from that condition. Ishmael, the scoffer and the persecutor, though a child of Abraham, lost by his impiety all connection with the covenants of promise. The question

of legitimacy was not mooted; it was his unbelief, his rejection of the Messiah, that excluded him.

Esau, likewise, though a Hebrew, was rejected. At the age of nineteen, and when capable of judging and acting for himself, he despised his birthright, rejected Christ in that act, and God rejected him. The Ishmaelites and the Edomites, therefore, though Hebrews by blood, were not Hebrews in truth, since they were both destitute of the vital principle of Hebrew nationality.

The Jews also, as a people, ceased to be Jews on their rejection of their Messiah. "He is a Jew who is one inwardly." The tribes that perished in the wilderness "could not enter in, because of unbelief." Whole nations, and that from the earliest times, had had their claims to Hebrew nationality vitiated on this principle. Faith was essential to it.

"They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, 'but in Isaac shall thy seed be called;' *i.e.* they which are the children of the flesh these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

The Gentiles, also, by faith become Abra-

ham's seed, are incorporated into his great family, are heirs according to the promise. They change their relations when they become Christians. But the Jew, in becoming a Christian, changes not his. He is like an original branch broken from the olive-tree and then re-engrafted into the parent stock. He is naturally an heir; and, if he severs his connection by unbelief, it is the fault of his conduct, not of his blood.

Hence, the Gentile had no other tie of nationality than that of faith. He, like a wild branch, was grafted in among the natural branches, and with them partook of the root and fatness of the tree. The converted Gentiles were, on this account, called by the apostles strangers and aliens, who by their faith had become fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of faith. The lineal Jew was, therefore, respected as one having a natural precedence over the Gentile. To his people pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the service of God, the promises, whose were the fathers, and of whom, as pertaining to the flesh, Christ came.

Christ was a Hebrew, and of the house of David. The twelve apostles were Jews. To them, as such, and respected as believers, it

was given to edit the New Testament, to gather and organize the Christian church, and in it to remain umpires in the decision of every question of faith and practice. Their recorded utterances are hence made final in every debate on these subjects to the end of time. They "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The New Testament church was not a new church, but a continuation of the old under new forms and with additional privileges. By uniting with it, Gentiles became the children of Abraham.

The following admonition derives all its force from this consideration:—"Boast not against the branches; . . . thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. . . . If thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

The Gentile, in common with the Jew, by faith inherits the righteousness of faith. This righteousness was not a political or a patrimonial, but a spiritual, blessing. It did not entitle the Gentile to the Holy Land. But the Jew, having been excluded from it as a just severity against his unbelief, returns to his normal state in it, when, by his faith, he is restored to divine favour.

In harmony with this view, his blindness is represented as partial, not perpetual. "Blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." It is partial, temporary, and must cease at the appointed time. But his blindness and his exile are to cease together.

I need not here repeat, but simply call to mind, what I have already said in the previous chapter on the down-treading of the land of Canaan for a limited period. It sustains the position now taken.

Other Scriptures suggest with equal clearness this twofold restoration. The institutions of the Jews were none of them conventional. Their entire polity was theocratical throughout. All authority, office, law, worship, and all the forms of either, were from Heaven, not of men. This made all Palestine, in all parts of it,

ultimately dependencies of Jerusalem, in which city the theocratical king resided, and the high-priest officiated as the divinely-appointed president of the sanhedrim. To Jerusalem the tribes went up not only to worship, but for justice and for the ultimate determination of controversies.

Hence, Jerusalem came to be the place of trial and of execution,—the spot more stained than any other with the blood of legalized murder. In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, from verse 23, our Lord first addresses the scribes and Pharisees, the men in power, denounces their hypocrisies, frauds, and malversations; and then he continues:—"Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. . . . O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not

see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The terms "Jerusalem" and "generation," though not precisely synonymous, comprehend the same commonwealth:—"generation" comprising the people that compose it, "Jerusalem," the same people under an organized government.

That our Lord here addresses the Hebrews as a national unity is also evident from the wide range over which his weeping eye passes as he takes in the affecting estimate of their guilt. The shadowy past rises up in the distinct recollection of its long-forgotten events.

The Jewish character had ever been the same. The perverseness which now oppressed him was that with which he had long been familiar. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!" How she sits and calls her young, and tenderly chides delay, and shelters them from the cold, and exposes herself, all uncomplaining, through the weary day and livelong night, to the dew, the wind, the rain and driving sleet, to save and rear them! Even so, as a hen gathereth and cherisheth her brood, have I sought and cherished thee. Amid the woes of bondage, in the mortar-beds of Egypt, and in the wilderness forty years long,

and in Canaan, how often would I have gathered thee, and by the river of Babylon for seventy years. And, during the last three years, how often in long nights of prayer, on lonely mountains, or amid shame and spitting till reproach hath broken my heart, and ye would not!

He also glances down upon the dark and guilty future, and cries, "Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your streets, and persecute them from city to city."

Thus, in this vision of their guilt, their character for evil had been uniform; it claved to their very being as a people. The dying cadences of their past ingratitude were even now mingling with the reproaches of the present hour and evoking most bitter accusations from the anticipated crimes of the future. It was evidently a national character now so severely reprehended; and it was a national doom now so reluctantly pronounced.

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." The house, the place of residence, when left desolate, is uninhabited, dreary, and falls into decay.

During most of the time for four hundred

years from the period of this denunciation, the Jews were banished from Jerusalem. Its walls and temple, levelled with the ground, were left in ruins.

After this, Constantine permitted the outcasts to assemble once a year to bewail their exile and the loss of the beautiful house in which their fathers worshipped. It was painful, even to a foe, to see them at each returning anniversary, clothed in sackcloth, come in long processions, sit down amid broken arches, subverted walls and altars, and to hear the bitter wail of the desolate as it rose and floated sadly over the surrounding ruins. But even this poor privilege has often been denied them.

The soil also has lost its fertility, or, at least, has been esteemed worthless for agricultural purposes; and, with every form of possible misrule to discourage industry, it still lies untilled. "The grass withereth after it groweth up;" the fig-tree blossoms not as aforetime; there is no fruit in the vine; the labour of the olive fails; the fields yield no meat; the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stall; the owl roosts on the forsaken balcony; the bat clings to the mouldering walls.

No country on earth within the same limits

was ever so filled with people. The smallest villages contained at least fifteen thousand, the larger twenty or thirty; and these were quite contiguous to each other.

A population of four millions, according to Volney, inhabited Judea alone. Out of one gate of its capital (according to Josephus) six hundred thousand dead bodies were carried during the siege under Titus, and at least a million perished on that occasion.

Its thronged thoroughfares have ever since been comparatively deserted, its "cities wasted, without inhabitant, its houses without man." The solid masonry of its towns is everywhere giving way. The stones are precipitated on the inmates, who retire to other apartments for a temporary shelter, and whose hands are never raised to repair a ruin or to resist the progress of decay.

In that devoted land, all social interest, all political importance, is utterly lost, and the universal downward tendency cannot be restrained. It is "*left* desolate." The providential ægis has been taken off; and all attempts, therefore, from external sources, to restore and to rebuild, have proved unavailing. Julian, aided by the people and the treasures of his empire, abandoned the attempt in de-

spair. Ruin could spoil and mar and impoverish, but no hand could restore and build: the earth rose up in Heaven's controversy, and fire-balls drove back the workmen.

These are some of the reasons for believing that the Jews as a nation are intended where it is said, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye [shall again exist as ye do now, and] shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Jews then had a national existence and a country; since then they have had neither. Outcast from their own land, they have been dispersed into every other, and have been mostly disfranchised in them all. They must repent, return, and reconstruct their prostrated polity, and say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." For it was not the individuals of that generation who were addressed as such, but the Hebrews as they existed in an organized state, in a collective national unity and responsibility; and in this same capacity are they to see by faith and acknowledge the Messiah.

Zechariah (chap. xii. verse 10) represents the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem as deeply penitent while looking on Him whom they had pierced. The same nation,

in the same land in which they rejected and murdered, shall see and adore their Lord.

The promise also of a restoration to the favour of God, and simultaneously to their own land, is often repeated. "In the day" (says Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi.) "that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded." The repentance and the return synchronize. The resurrection (detailed by this prophet in the next chapter) of the whole house of Israel makes equally clear assurance of the twofold restoration,—the one to spiritual, the other to national, life.

The promise also which in the same chapter is subjoined—to wit: that they should never more be divided into two nations, but ever after that event be and remain one nation, under one king and shepherd—fixes this predicted restoration to a period subsequent to the Christian era, and, indeed, to our own times, since it has never yet occurred.

The valley also seen in this vision stretches out under the eye of the prophet to the horizon, and is the vast charnel of Israel's dispersed generations. Like the bones of an immense and fallen army, separated the one from the other, and promiscuously scattered over the

plain, so had Israel lost home and country, political and ecclesiastical life, ruler and priest, law and altar; and, in the dissolution of all the bonds of a living commonwealth, they were found scattered into every kingdom, and without a resting-place in any;—among foes who, while they refused them organized life, protected them at the same time from extermination; who, while they repressed among them every effort to reconstruct their ruined nationality, refused also interment to its bones. The resurrection takes place where the bones lie scattered; the restoration follows.

“If,” says Paul, “the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?” Both events are operative. The casting away is the reconciling of the world; the receiving of them, life from the dead.

The original grant to Abraham and to his posterity has never yet fully come into their possession. That grant extended from the entering-in of Hamath the Great, (far north of any territory ever yet occupied by them,) to the river of Egypt,—a limit far south of any of their former possessions. It was also to extend, from west to east, from the foot of the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. David made

most of this whole country tributary; but Israel never occupied it, never filled it from limit to limit with men like a flock. A part of the Holy Land has been very densely settled; but the remainder has ever been in the possession of others.

The land also evidently awaits the return of its children. The materials for constructing cities, dwellings, terraces, causeways, bridges, are all on the ground, ready to rise out of the heaps of rubbish and to subserve all the purposes of the restored community. The soil so long untilled has been drinking in fertility from the dew of heaven, and is now more capable than ever of sustaining an immense population. Down-trodden and desolate, it mourns the absence of its rightful cultivators, and refuses to yield its increase to the hands of aliens.

Its expatriated heirs are likewise without a home or a country elsewhere, and who, as the world's bankers and merchants, can, on the shortest notice, when the way is prepared, gratify their long-cherished desire to return.

The obstruction also at the present time in their way in Europe and Asia is already fallen into the processes of a fatal decay. Ishmael, smitten with decline and consumption, cannot

long retain the sceptre or the sword. His eye waxes dim; untoward events surprise him; the angel of the bottomless pit, who opened for him the cave of Hara, is now opening for him the gates of death; the pestilential damps of the Crimea and of the Bosphorus are but the margins of that dark cloud hanging in deadly wreaths over every centre of life in his doomed and perishing being. What then, within a brief period, will there be to hinder Israel's return?

This great event,—oh! how desirable, since it is linked with the world's salvation!—it shall be life from the dead. Then “many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;” then shall sectional animosities and the wars of uncongenial races cease, swords be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, fierce men loose their destructive propensities, and a renovated world resound with the melodies of Zion and the songs of the reaper.

Egypt has become the basest of kingdoms; the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency is as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Persia and Greece, loosed from their founda-

tions by Ishmael, are afloat at all uncertainties in a sea which is itself soon to waste away in its own dissolving bed. Rome rises but to fall; while, amid the ruins of despairing nations, Zion rises to fall no more.

“See thy bright altars throng’d with prostrate kings,
And heap’d with products of Sabea springs!
For thee Idumæ’s spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir’s mountains glow.
See heaven his sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day!
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn;
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze,
O’erflow thy courts: the Light himself shall shine
Reveal’d, and God’s eternal day be thine.
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But, fix’d his word, his saving power remains:
Thy realm forever lasts; thine own Messiah reigns.

POPE’S MESSIAH.

THE END.

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